THE SHIA IMAMI ISMAILIA

COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the organisation of the Shia Imami Ismailis in Britain. Part I is concerned with certain background topics. Chapter 1 touches on the history of Ismailism in general, including how it came to India, and on points of doctrine which can best be understood in this context. The next three chapters of part I consider respectively religious, administrative and financial aspects of Ismaili organisation in East Africa as it has been developed during the twentieth century. The last chapter in part I discusses in greater detail the role of the imam (Aga Khan) in promoting change among his followers. The relevance of some of these developments for settlement in Britain is suggested.

The first chapter of part II (chapter 6) describes the pattern of Ismaili migration to Britain, and how the composition of this migration changed over the years. Something of the resultant social diversity among Ismailis in Britain is suggested in chapter 7, though here the emphasis is on diversity in terms of British social classifications. In chapter 8 some detailed case histories are set out in an attempt to bring out the altered significance of collective Ismaili organisation in Britain. At this point the question of exogamy is also considered. The Ismaili council in Britain, based on the London mosque, forms the subject of chapter 9; comparison with its East African counterparts argues the weakness of the British council, and some of the reasons are suggested. The concluding chapter 10 looks tentatively at the Ismaili migration to Britain in terms of the changing basis of community economic activity in East Africa in the light of the post-independence situation there, and also discusses the structure of the Ismaili organisation in Britain, examining the decline in collective organisation and the social fragmentation of Ismailis here.

INTRODUCTION

Three matters will be dealt with here: the object studied in the following pages; the methods employed; and the validity of the conclusions thereby derived.

The object studied

Some of the contradictions and confusions in the following text arise because I have been unable to constitute a satisfactory object for analysis. This is partly masked by frequent use of the term 'community', a concept so polymorphic and ubiquitous as to lead one to believe that it merely marks out an analytical abyss. Simply juxtaposing the phrases, 'the Ismaili community in East Africa', 'the Ismaili community in Britain' and 'the world Ismaili community', all of them permissible usages, suggests the magnitude of the point. Heteroclite phenomena such as these cannot but be restless lumped together under a single rubric.

I hope this restlessness shows. If it does show, it will reflect the fact that I have not the rigorously defined concepts with which to penetrate beyond it. Had I tried to develop such concepts for myself this would have been a work of theory, a different job altogether, and the Ismailis would probably have slipped out of sight. The result is that I have tended to hang on to the word 'class' rather too tightly, in season and out. But this again is a concept blurred by contradictory definitions; this time it is not that these definitions fail for lack of rigour, rather that there are too many of them masquerading under the same name.

Still, the Ismaili 'communities' of the text have to be treated in terms of the 'class' relations within them. That means that they have to be understood as partaking in relations which go far beyond the internal dynamic of Ismaili institutions, for the latter merely modify, at their level, a class 'system'. In spite of this obvious truth little will be found here on the subject of the development of class society in East Africa, or the alleged decay of it in Britain. Torn out of context, the fragments of two other objects - class relations in East Africa and in Britain - are difficult to incorporate convincingly into a new and different one, much less to make

relations between these fragments. Nonetheless I have attempted to do this. In one sense this produces the now-approved phenomenon of an attempt to understand a relation between relations, but it soon appears that the relations related are not separate things at all, only aspects of the same relation. By this I mean that the foundation of class in East Africa, that is, the accumulation of capital to which labour is forced to come, is not only like the foundation of class in Britain, but also the same foundation. This is weakly recognised in the existence of the Sterling Area, but we shall see it in action: capital accumulated in East Africa invested in the London property market, in education which will be deployed in England, and in bank deposits, unit trusts and insurance policies (some of these funds perhaps reinvested abroad); and we shall see East African labour producing a return on British capital invested there, often in alliance with indigenous capital. The export and import of capital, and the immigration and emigration of labour are redeployments of what amounts to an international labour force in search of international capital.

This is not to claim that there are no discontinuities cutting across this global relation; in the Sterling Area there is no free movement of capital, while in the Commonwealth there is no free movement of labour (even when the workers concerned are British subjects descent may prevent them coming to Britain). Some of the major discontinuties are the work of governments - exchange control restrictions and immigration policy, for example - others the result of deeper factors like differential standards of education, language, kinship and, the point in our case, religious ideology. For it is the latter which comes closest to locating the point at which the discontinuties concerning us arise. Perhaps the object before us is therefore best defined as the intervention of a religion in economics, and hence in class relations. Beyond this it concerns the life styles which are related to class, but in doing so tends to assume that class as an economic category has direct social connotations. In part I I have accordingly aimed to show how Ismailism came to play a role in the distribution of resources in East Africa and hence how it affected relations between classes there. This

effect, it might be added, was not limited to the adherents of Ismailism alone, for there are some indications that others were induced to follow the Ismailis' lead. In part II this is followed up in Britain, where it is suggested that the migrants have been unable to replicate the involution of relationships between the Ismaili fractions of socio-economic strata. The original intervention of Ismailism in East Africa is still present in Britain in that it heterogenised the Ismailis and also led to the westernisation which together allowed them to reproduce their socio-economic diversity here, however; it is merely that its power to modify class relations between Ismailis is diminished.

Methods

There is a great difference between the methods used in collecting material for the two parts. Broadly speaking, part I was relatively formal and documentary, part II highly informal, often a matter of participant observation. On the first, I was in East Africa for three months in 1967, though for four or five years before that I had been hearing about, and taking an interest in, the East African Ismaili organisation. Kin and friends were kind enough not to hide that here was something remarkable, and so it proved. Great courtesy was shown me and much trouble taken on my behalf, with the result that I was able to talk with officers of the mosques, members of councils at all levels, officials of the financial institutions and the chairman of a tribunal, as well as members of the various provincial committees. Some of these contacts took the form of interviews to which I would take a set of prepared questions designed to show how much I already knew; luckily many of these occasions seemed to run on into lunch or dinnertime with the result that I was saved the worst consequences. Meanwhile I pored over the constitution, read some of the Aga Khan's speeches, looked at the companies' balance sheets (though I have since realised that more was to be gleaned from them than I knew) and read their prospectuses, noted down lists of former mukhis and kamadias in mosques, and asked innumerable questions (which was only fair, since I had to answer innumerable questions as well). Part I thus overlaps considerably with a

finals dissertation presented at Leicester University in 1968.[1] After over two more years of letters, conversations and East African contacts renewed here parts of this dissertation were pruned and some additional material added, some of it documentary, the rest on the ritual observances, on patronage, the role of the companies (which continues to evolve) and on the processes of westernisation.

Understanding what was happening in Britain was another matter. Here there are no highly structured bureaucracies, their rules freely available, only a single major jamatkhana, and no Ismaili companies; in place of them only a series of families and individuals scattered over Greater London and beyond, and a single council by no means as highly developed as its counterparts in East Africa. Vertiginous amorphism produced an awareness of the need to select, but on what basis? Clearly there was no possibility of taking a random sample, since the characteristics of the Ismaili population as a whole were unknown, even as to numbers; while to assume that the Ismailis I knew were in any statistical sense representative would have been an obvious error. At the same time I was aware that there were discontinuities in my network and in those of other Ismailis. It was plain, for example, that standards of housing varied from household to household, as did income, level of education and many other factors. These variations were not merely descriptive, for they seemed to accord with social disjunctions, expressed sometimes as an undervalued kinship connection, as a simmering dislike or as a consistent record of outmarriage in a particular family. I also knew enough of the history of the London jamat to realise that there had been distinct waves of migration which had changed its social composition, though how I was not sure.

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1. 'The Ismailis of East Africa'.

At this point a weakness in part I shows through in part II in that there is no sufficiently detailed account of the social composition of the East African Ismailis, only a crude two-, sometimes three-category model of class affiliations, whereas even middle class Ismailis have something akin to a four-class image of their own 'community'. (An extensive, statistical study could make a great deal of play with the way models were socially distributed in East Africa, and how they changed in Britain.) Hierarchy itself is often a view propounded by upper social strata, as against simpler 'them' and 'us' models at the other end of the social scale, and it may be that I have not avoided implicitly accepting 'their' point of view.

The final selection of cases for detailed presentation was thus somewhat arbitrary, in that I made it accord with patterns of resource distribution and social strategies which seemed to me significantly different. In this I did not remain a passive observer, for at one stage it became clear that without extending my own network in order to bypass discontinuities in those of other people I was going to be severely limited. The very effort required to do this commended to me the opinion that there were indeed wide gaps between different associational areas. It remains possible that I did not extend it enough, and no doubt every Ismaili would have reservations about this. In that sense the results are provisional, justified only by their internal coherence and their fruitfulness in designating some of the patterns of association within a range which cannot be certainly scanned in its entirety. It may be thought that the inclusion of what look like extreme cases (of dispersal through the British social structure) implies that most of the story has been told, but I cannot guarantee that there are not 'more extreme' cases at either end of the scale, and have reasons to suspect that there are. That I have not sought out such cases is a genuflection towards 'representativeness'.

In chapter 9 I have mentioned some of my difficulties in connection with the council, so different after my experience in East Africa. Though I pursued its officers I had to remain content with a hare instead of a

fox. This material could be much improved, even though Mohamed K's helpfulness was limited only by obligations imposed by his membership of the council. Chapter 9 is therefore replete with deductions not themselves directly verifiable, some of them perhaps unjustified though I have tried to give reasons for my assertions. Occasionally newspapers and other journalistic writings were helpful - if only they did not dwell so exclusively with the Aga Khan's capital, his horses and his houses!

Validity

Some of the main objections to my conclusions have already been mentioned. As far as part I is concerned they really revolve round the fact that a relative stranger cannot know whether his contacts are being managed, with the result that what he fondly imagines to be a rounded account would look like ideology from another point of view. This happened to me (not because anyone willed it), and I am not now sure how to correct for it. Thus, though my account of the formal properties of institutions seems to hold, some might be eager to point out that I had not grasped the way they 'really' worked. The migration of the first part of the 1960s (chapter 6) tended to bring this home to me. Likewise in England, where there is no set of formal institutions to rely on, though I have suggested that I was not content with my social network as it stood and sought to extend it in ways which often seemed distressingly instrumental. One result is that I have no guarantee that my selection of case histories is at all statistically representative of Ismailis in Britain. However, it seems to me that statistical manipulation is worthwhile only when the attributes to which the figures refer have been situated theoretically, that is, when their meaning is clear. I have looked at a relatively small number of case histories of Ismailis in Britain, trying to estimate the significance and consequences of variations in behaviour. Perhaps one result is that if it should become possible for some sort of valid sampling to be attempted for Ismailis, the matters worth processing statistically will be a little more obvious.

My hand has been guided by a great many people, Ismaili and otherwise. Sami Zubaida, now of Birkbeck College, supervised my dissertation at Leicester; some of his advice has at long last prevailed. In every way the present thesis is immeasurably indebted to Professor Adrian Mayer's skilful combination of the roles of critic and taskmaster. Obviously nothing would have been achieved without the goodwill of Ismailis in three continents. Not only have they provided me with information of an empirical kind, but often with interpretations which I have adopted as my own. Many friends and close kin will recognise the truth of this; among them I must mention by name Shiraz Dossa, now at the University of Toronto, whose few hours in England en route for Canada led to a quite disproprotionate reconsideration of much of part I. Despite its containing much of which she disapproves, my wife's contribution to this thesis is all-pervading - as though I had a second pair of eyes. I have drawn freely on her encyclopaedic knowledge of her own community, and nothing said here has not profited from years of domestic discussion.

PART I

EAST AFRICA

Chapter 1

THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

The key concepts which underpin the ideology of modern Ismailism were largely products of the revolution which gave birth to Islam. The resulting theologico-political system remains active today, even though it has spread to countries far from its home, among peoples for whom it was not elaborated, and into an era where once-powerful theologies have retreated before the rise of rationalism. In order to establish the principles of so resilient a doctrine it is necessary to go back to the conditions in which it was first developed. A brief survey of its subsequent history will indicate the form in which it reached the people whose contemporary situation is examined here.

As a revolutionary thinker who became a secular ruler, Mohamed provided the theory of his own legitimacy. Fundamentally this turned on his claim to articulate the will of the deity, an attribute in his time unique to himself. His legacy was thus a body of texts expressing the divine will and a polity supposedly founded on these teachings. Rival groups within the polity developed different concepts of the attributes of the successors of the prophet. The main dispute seems to have centred on continuity or fixity of revelation. If prophecy ended with the prophet then the ruler who succeeded him received only the mantle of secular authority. Such a ruler would require a form of legitimacy not related to his religious virtuosity, and this was realised in the elective concept of the caliphate. The theory of the fixity of revelation, and thus of the secular caliphate, defines the Sunni view, which stands opposed to that of the Shias, who argued that the prophet's capacity to articulate the will of the deity passed to his descendants through Fatima, his daughter, and her husband Ali, who was also the prophet's cousin.

Shi'ism thus inaugurated an hereditary imamate, involving the continuing presence in the world of a spokesman for the divine. Lewis, (1940), Watt (1966) and others have seen in this theological dispute the ideological form

of a struggle between various social strata for power in the caliphate. What is certain is that the Sunnis won the initial victory for, after his assassination when caliph, Ali was not succeeded by his son. Though the line of Fatimid imams, pretenders to the caliphate, continued, a weakness which was to recur soon appeared in the mode of succession after the death of the sixth imam, Jafar as-Sadiq. In theory the imam could select any of his living male descendants to succeed him.[1] At first Jafar as-Sadiq had proclaimed his eldest son, Ismail, as heir, but repenting his decision revoked the choice and nominated Musa, another son. There was a schism, Musa becoming seventh imam of the Ithna Ashariya sect. After the twelfth Ithna Ashariya imam the line seems to have failed - the imam went into concealment until the day of judgment. The historical tension between the factions following Musa and Ismail was revived in East Africa in the nineteenth century over the question of the imam's authority.[2]

But the eponymous imam of the Ismaili line, though repudiated by his father and ousted by his brother, retained a following. His son, Muhammad ibn Ismail, fled the caliphate about the middle of the second century of the Muslim era, and founded the first hidden imamate of the Ismaili line in Iraq and Persia. During this period agents of the imam effected the conversion of the Carmathians of Bahrain, accused in Sunni sources of operating communism of property and community of women. Eventually, in 909 AD, these imams emerged in Egypt as the Fatimid caliphs, thus ending the period of concealment. But at the end of the eleventh century there was another succession crisis following the death of the eighth Fatimid caliph,

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1. The present imam described in an interview published in the Sunday Times (12.12. 1965) how it was not known until his grandfather's will was read upon whom the choice had fallen. All four male descendants held themselves in readiness. See also Frischauer, chap. XIII.

2. Secession even split families, so that elderly Ismailis may be met whose siblings are Ithna Asharia: and see Morris (1968), p. 78.

Mustansir. Again the dispute arose from the question of which of Mustansir's sons had been appointed successor. Second thoughts had replaced Nizar by Mustali, and Mustali succeeded to the caliphate. This schism within Ismailism produced therefore the Mustalian and Nizari lines. In two more generations, however, the line of Mustali failed, or, as the Mustalians say, the imam went into concealment. Like the Ithna Ashariya imam, his reappearance is expected and in the meantime the Dai al mutlaq leads the sect. The Mustalians proselytised in India, where the community, which is also present in East Africa, is called the Daudi Bohra sect. Though the Bohras are thus Ismailis the term has been effectively appropriated by the Nizaris.

Doubts about the validity of the descent of the modern imams from Mohamed centre on the period of first concealment, before the Fatimid caliphate, and on the events following the death of Mustansir. While Nizar died in the prisons of his kinsman the caliph, his devotees retired to the Levantine fortress of Alamut. Here, under the first Grand Master of Alamut, Hasan bin Sabbah (who in his youth is said to have studied with Omar Khayyam), a programme of terrorism and political murder gained the Nizarians an unfortunate reputation.[1] In due course it was claimed that the descent of Ali through Nizar was incorporated in the line of Grand Masters, so continuing the line of living Nizari imams.

It may have been at this time that the first missionary activity in India was initiated, but if so it cannot have long continued from Alamut, for in 1256, with the connivance of Imam Rukn al-Din, the fortress was taken by the Mongols, who had by then exhausted the usefulness of the Ismailis as

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1. On this period in general see Lewis (1967), where the revolutionary nature of Nizarian Ismailism emerges strongly. Lewis sees the 'terrorism' of the Assassins in this light, though at this distance he cannot say with much confidence what the groups were whose grievances were articulated through Ismaili ideology.

Hassan bin Sabbah is not forgotten. Thus the peroration of an Ismaili speaker to an Ismaili audience: 'let us revive the flaming spirit of that great reformer, that great Ismaili hero, Hassan-bin-Sabbah', 'Ismailis in 1964', typescript of an address given by Dr. Noorali Nanji at the Ismailia Cultural Centre, London, 1964.

allies. The imamate thereupon returned to Persia and concealment. The line of imams was maintained, however, through the six centuries before the forty-sixth imam finally fled from Persia into India in the nineteenth century. Though it seems that many of the intervening imams lived in adversity and obscurity, the early part of the second Persian interlude saw a powerful missionary effort directed towards north-western India, so that when imam Shah Hasan Ali set up his darkhana, or headquarters, at Bombay in the 1840's there was already an organised community. The proselytisation was carried on by a series of pirs,[1] the first of whom, Pir Nur Satagur, is reputed to have reached Gujarat and Kutch early in the twelfth century, that is, before the founding of the Delhi Sultanate, and during the time of Alamut. Thus Ismailism, and in particular its Nizarian form, was present in India during the long period when Islam and Hinduism toyed mutually with one another's doctrines, so much so that Ahmad classifies Ismailism as a 'minor syncretic sect'.[2] For this the pirs are to blame as much as the resistence of the new converts to a total religious reconstruction, for the former were willing to use Hindu symbols to express their doctrine. Most important in this respect was Pir Sadr al Din, whose mission seems to have begun about 1430. His work, 'Das Avatar', identified Ali with the long-awaited tenth incarnation of Vishnu: it remained a standard Ismaili text at least until the last few years in East Africa. According to 'Noorum-Mubin',[3]

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1. A pir is a non-hereditary spiritual guide appointed by the imam.

2. See Ahmad (1964), p. 160.

3. 'Noorum-Mubin', published by the Ismaili Association for India, is sub-titled (in English) 'The Sacred Cord of God; a Glorious History of Ismaili Imams'. It consists of some 745 pages of hagiography, and is the source of the narrative parts of the school texts referred to below.

even Nur Satagur gained much of his effect through his extensive knowledge of Hinduism.

The pirs were thus responsible for wresting certain groups in India away from Hinduism. Among these were sections of the Lohana and Bhatia castes in certain areas, who took the title of Khojas (Khwaja), which is used by Ismailis in East Africa to refer to themselves.[1] But beyond his prowess as a missionary (one of his titles commemorates his alleged conversion of six million people), Sadr al Din was also responsible for the basic institution of local Ismaili communities, the jamatkhana, and for dassondhu[2] 'Noorum-Mubin' records that the first jamatkhanas were founded by him in Sind, the Punjab and Kashmir, and gives the names of the mukhis[3] he appointed. Sadr al Din thus provided the foundations of the organisation of Ismaili communities in the absence of the imam and in a largely non-Muslim environment. Through dassondh the jamats[4] were in touch with the central organisation, while subsequent pirs could keep them up to the doctrinal mark. Whether Sadr al Din's organisation was truly original or merely a modification of practices of the caste groups he converted is difficult to tell. What is certain is that the system proved durable in India, formed the basis of a far more elaborate organisation in East Africa, and now has been replicated in Britain and North America in the twentieth century.

According to Hollister,[5] Sadr al Din was the most influential of the great proselytising pirs. In the sixteenth century the office itself was

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1. Though the term also refers to other Indian Muslims, for example Ithna Ashariyas. See Trimingham, p. 105 (n).

2. Jamatkhana (Ismaili mosques) and dassondh (religious tithe) are more fully explained in chapter 2.

3. The important role of mukhi is described in chapter 2.

4. The local Ismaili body attending a jamatkhana.

5. Hollister, (1953) p. 356.

discontinued (or rather reabsorbed into that of the imam). Until the coming of the Aga Khans to India the main concern was with consolidation of gains already made. This might well reflect the value of the sect's exclusiveness to its adherents, especially where they were merchants engaged in long-distance trade. At any rate the result was that the Indian communities lived at a distance from their imam, whom they knew as an object of pilgrimage and a recipient of dassondh, a situation which persisted in East Africa until 1899 when the third Aga Khan and forty-eighth imam paid his first visit there.

Meanwhile in Persia the fortunes of the imams prospered. By the turn of the nineteenth century they were noblemen, and the forty-sixth imam became commander of the Shah's armies, whence his title of Aga Khan. Intrigued against at court, he attempted an unsuccessful coup and eventually in 1840 fled the country. He reached Sind and there put the remnant of his forces at the disposal of the British, who were in the process of annexation. For this service he was granted the status of a hereditary prince, and the right to the title 'His Highness', which has adhered to subsequent Aga Khans. Eventually the first Aga Khan settled in Bombay, where his advent touched off an important sequence of events. Even before his arrival elements of the Bombay jamat had been disputing the status of the Aga Khan, and in particular the payment of tithe. The question came before the courts in India in 1866, since clearly the position of the imam was not justiciable within the community. The courts found in favour of the Aga Khan, declaring not only that he was the living imam of the Shia Imami Ismailis, but also that his title to community property was personal and absolute.[1] With the continuing goodwill of the large majority of

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1. Mr. Justice Arnould's judgment is well known to Ismailis today, and battered copies of it are sometimes flourished when matters arise to which it refers.

Ismailis, and backed by the authority of the Imperial courts, the first Aga Khan was able to accumulate a considerable fortune. When the Prince of Wales visited India in the 1870s, the Aga Khan entertained him: Morris says that 'Both were fat and exchanged hunting stories' (p. 71).

If the first Aga Khan, through the turf and through affable relationships with the British royal family, began the evolution of a role for the imamate which looked beyond the immediate Indian environment for its inspirations, his grandson (whose father, the second Aga Khan, reigned only from 1881 until his death in 1885) much expanded and elaborated it. At his father's death he was only eight years old. When he died in 1957 he had reigned for over 70 years, a period in which he was able to develop the modern imamate. His 'Memoirs' are a remarkable record of a many-sided life, as statesman, sportsman and religious leader. In the first capacity he was much involved in the unsuccessful diplomatic effort to keep Turkey out of the first world war; later he was a reluctant, though vigorous, convert to the idea of Pakistan; in between he was first president of the League of Nations. As a sportsman his racing stables were much renowned (though his successor has not the same enthusiasm for the turf). His achievements as a religious leader will hopefully emerge in the next few chapters.

While the imam was making his mark in European diplomatic and social circles, his followers were much to the fore in the transformation of East Africa which followed the European powers' annexations of the late nineteenth century. Western India had long traded with the East African coast, according to the much-quoted 'Periplus Maris Erythreae' since at least the first century AD. The trade expanded in all directions in the thirteenth century, involving countries as far afield as China in direct contact with East Africa.

> In East Africa it is from this time onwards that religious monuments such as mosques and tombs are found all along the coast. It is probably from this period, too, that the 'Swahili' language and culture began to take shape among the Islamised Bantu people of the coastal plain' (Oliver and Fage, p. 99).

Patterns of trade changed as first the Portugeuse, then the Omani Arabs and finally the British became dominant powers in the area. The first

incursions into the interior were motivated largely by trade, particularly the slave trade, but they produced no large scale permanent settlement by non-indigenous peoples. Zanzibar provided the main entrepot, and it was here that the Sultans of Muscat and Oman set up their court in the early nineteenth century. As a centre of trade Zanzibar proved attractive to merchants from western India, and the settlement gradually increased. During the course of the century some Indian business houses rose to great power under the sultanate, which contracted with them as tax collectors. It was through the Indian settlement that the British gained a purchase in the East African coast; the anti-slave trade legislation applied to British subjects as such, so that increasing British hegemony over the sultanate was presented as an interest in restraining British Indian subjects from dealing in slaves.[1]

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century there had for long been Indian settlement in Zanzibar and in other towns along the coast. The leaders of the community were not traders in East Africa merely for business purposes; they were permanent residents. Even in the latter part of the century they began to make the beginnings of trading organisations in the interior. Prominent in this was the Ismaili Alidina Visram, and the Bohra house of Jeevanjee. But their economic penetration of the hinterland was skeletal compared with that stimulated by the building of the railway from Mombasa to Nairobi and thence to Lake Victoria, which was begun in 1896. For the twenty-five years following this there was migration of two kinds from India into East Africa. The railway itself was built by Panjabi indentured labour. According to Mangat, most of the Panjabis returned to India after their period of indenture, if they survived it. This left the major part of the migration to free migrants, for the most part from western India. This migration was restricted in 1944.[2]

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1. See Mangat, (1969), pp. 4-5.

2. Mangat (1969) pp. 39 and 160; and also Morris (1968), p. 8. The implication that East African Indians are all descended from the railway 'coolies' had a certain ideological overtone in the political history of East Africa. It frequently reappears in print even now, for example Pearson (1969) p.12.

It was much to do with Alidina Visram's economic pre-eminence that Ismailis were deeply involved in the penetration of the interior. Even by 1900 his network of stores and trading posts extended over the three territories of Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda (their boundaries were different then). Although his reputation among Ismailis today is of one whose allegiance was to the Indian population of East Africa as a whole, rather than a man of his own community, Visram's stores were wherever possible managed by his fellow Ismailis.[1] Because of this preferential policy (which must have made good sense, given the frail legality at the time) Ismailis were present in the interior at a very early date, and many of them must have gained invaluable experience. When the railway vastly expanded the opportunities for trade away from the coastal plain, they were well equipped to participate directly and as intermediaries. They were not, however, able to become landowners or agriculturalists, even had they wished it, for after 1905 all ideas of settling Indians on the land in East Africa were dropped, partly in favour of European agriculture in the Kenya Highlands, and increasingly later on in recognition of the 'paramountcy' of indigenous African interests, especially in Tanganyika under the League of Nations mandate. Thus Asians, and a fortiori Ismailis, were forced to accumulate commercial capital rather than invest in land. At the same time they could acquire urban real estate and, under favourable conditions, might have set up manufacturing and processing industry. In fact, when the administration decreed that only cotton ginners could buy raw cotton, Alidina Visram did set up a ginnery. This was the exception, however, certainly so far as Ismailis were concerned.

In the course of the next few chapters, the appearance of Ismaili financial institutions will be detailed, as will the elaboration of their administrative hierarchy. The emergence of this complex structure depended

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1. Mangat, pp. 53 and 75n.

on the communal organisation of Indians in East Africa. That the Ismailis, along with other caste and sectarian Indian groups, organised themselves around these symbols has been seen as surprising. Morris, having mentioned that many Indians in East Africa have abandoned tradition in favour of new values culled from the European presence in the three territories, remarks that -

> An outsider might have postulated that in these circumstances a single Indian community would emerge, stratified possibly in terms of social class, but not in terms of caste or sectarian differences. What in fact emerged was a number of separate caste and sectarian communities, each one of them more significant in the everyday lives of its members than the Indian community as a whole. (p. 27)

This fragmentation of the Indian population of East Africa he ascribes to four factors. First, though the hierarchy of caste and sectarian communities was not imported into East Africa, the ease of communication with India made the amalgamation of these groups, especially at the level of inter-marriage, surpassingly difficult. Many individuals 'lived in two worlds', their reputations in India affecting their conduct in Africa. Second, the gross expansion in numbers made it increasingly possible for Indians to ignore most other Indians outside their own group, while political pressures on Indians as a whole were not so great as to force them into closer association across caste and sectarian boundaries. Third, Morris sees in the Ismailis a 'pace-making group' who consistently stressed their distinctness from other Asians, especially towards the administrative authorities. Because they were so successful 'with the administration and in economic life' other Indians were 'compelled...to examine and in greater or lesser degree imitate their precedent'. Fourth, the prominence which came the way of leaders of the Ismaili community in the wider society, through seats on advisory bodies to the administration and on legislative bodies, motivated other 'successful men to emphasise the separate interests of their own communities and thus to multiply the routes to power and prestige.'[1]

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1. Morris (1968), pp. 41-4.

This can by no means be taken as a complete explanation of the phenomenon.[1] Though the great majority of Indians in East Africa did not pass through the melting pot of indentured labour, as did the Fiji Indians,[2] the surveillance of subcontinental eyes has subsided over the course of the years, so that very few are now in contact with any kin in India, still less concerned with a reputation there. Once it was established that the settlement in East Africa was permanent, and that for most it was not a prelude to retirement in India, as it has been for most of this century, the sanction against non-communally acceptable behaviour must be seen as residing in the structure of East African Indian society. The growth in numbers of the Indian population may well have been a condition of communalisation, but can scarcely have been a cause. In itself it must have reduced reliance on India, for with a little management marriage pools could be arranged so as to avoid the expedient of importing brides from India. In effect Morris's second explanation, or factor, undermines his first.

The third and fourth factors which Morris employs in explaining communalisation boil down to the success with which Ismailis, through their tight organisation, achieved ends which excited the envy of other Asians. These ends seem to be influence over the colonial administration on the one hand, and economic success on the other. On the first, Morris documents how the united voice of one section of the Asian population endeared it to the administrators impatient with uncomprehended factionalism. But it is the second point which must be seen as the driving force of Ismaili 'pace-setting'. The Ismailis possessed a unique formula for economic success.

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1. It is, however, more satisfactory than that of Bharati: 'Whether the purely historical accident that the late Aga Khan, a modern intellectual, a humanist and a cosmopolitan issued firmans (canonical injunctions) which modernised the community by decree, or whether there is an inherent lenience in the Ishmaili version of Muslim teachings, or if they both combined to change the community, is hard to assess' (Agehananda Bharati in Ghai (ed), p. 26).

2. Described in Mayer (1961).

At the level of economic activity Ismaili businessmen were all along in direct competition with non-Ismailis. Exclusiveness at other levels implies no corollary that economically there was some cordon sanitaire between the communities. Bankruptcy, which is by no means rare in the histories even of prominent East African Asian families, is no respector of religion or caste as such. Any group which had an edge on the others economically therefore stood to reap considerable benefits.[1] If it could accumulate capital at an organisational level higher than the family or kin group, and allocate it to growth points in enterprise, it could achieve just such an edge. Once launched it could improve the level of education of all its members, at the same time maximising income from extra-communal employment and improving the quality of knowhow and receptivity towards new ideas in its own concerns, or in concerns owned by members of the community. It could improve the housing, health and diet of its members too, thus increasing their economic efficiency and competitive power. Under such conditions the personal fortunes of its upper strata might merely parallel those of their counterparts in other communities, but as a whole the level of well-being would be higher, the feeling of security more pronounced. Being able to count on the loyalty of their co-religionists, prominent men could truly represent themselves as spokesmen for their community, and thus carry real weight with the administration. The logic of communalisation is thus related to economic advantage. It is in what might be called the take-off that the Ismailis had a standing start on their fellow Indians.

Given this perspective it is interesting to ask under what conditions organisation of this kind is possible. It is being suggested that the most movable, disposable anonymous asset of all, credit, was being pooled and administered for the communal good by the Ismailis. Of course property in common is a frequent phenomenon, but where it is a matter of land or other immovables the problem of security is not so serious. In general it might

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1. Note also the emphasised phrase on p.175 below.

be said that where money is involved relations between trustee and trustor are either extremely personal, involving personal sanctions, or extremely impersonal and formalised, as in the classical Weberian idealisation of bureaucracy, involving sanctions of a like kind.[1] Family property may be taken as an example of the first type, a limited company as an example of the second. Of course there are all sorts of deviations from these patterns, from bank managers who risk becoming too friendly with their customers to husbands who insist on the keeping of detailed household accounts. It is even possible that too extreme an insistence on either would lead to contradiction in the relationship. But in the case of a community like the Ismailis, or like those of their fellow Asians in East Africa, neither is a going possibility for the scale of credit involved. The possibility of bureaucratic affective neutrality may be taken as nil, except where non-Ismaili management has been brought in (as it has, for example, in Jubilee Insurance, q.v.). On the other hand, though it is rare for two East African Ismailis to be able to demonstrate no kinship between themselves, this does not mean that they are all effective kin to one another. In these circumstances an even-handed administration of community property requires that the administrators be emancipated from personal demands upon them. But the incorruptible individual trades his public reputation for unpopularity among his closest kin and friends. He must, therefore, be able to rely on values which all recognise as overriding those of kinship and friendship. At the same time he must be able to show that he is vulnerable to real sanctions if he shows fear or favour in his duties. For it is not suggested that the danger of outright defalcation is or ever was serious. That is the domain of the law. What is possible is the channelling of funds by legal means into undeserving hands, the partisan use of discretionary powers.

We have already seen how in India the status of community property was defined by the courts, namely as being the personal property of the imam.

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1. Weber, III, i and ii.

Given the consent of the imam, therefore, the administration of community property makes the administrators legally answerable to him. But more important than this is the fact that the imam is imam of the unpaid administrators themselves. Their allegiance to him is the value-reference they require for emancipation from personal claims made upon them, attempts to make them show favour. At the same time it is apparent that there are real and rapid sanctions available against any administrator who wavers in his adherence to these values, these sanctions being of a religious nature (though they might be expressed in secular form, dismissal, for example, they would still involve the displeasure of the imam, a serious matter as we shall see). Both the role of the imam and the ideology of the imamate are thus crucial for an understanding of the Ismaili form of organisation in East Africa.

The motivation of the administrators to give up valuable time and in some offices actually to disburse personal funds can be left until later. What matters at the moment is the role of recent imams, in the sense of their policies - their historical role - and how they derive the authority to play this role. The first of these will be dealt with after a description of the religious, financial and administrative organisation of the community. The second, the ideology of the imamate, has already been partially described, in terms of its historical origin. It is not enough, however, to say that the imam is the direct male descendant of Ali and Fatima, and thus of the prophet. The question of the status of the imamate arises. How did Ismailis reconcile the office of imam with its worldly, much-married, Anglophile, race-going former incumbent? How well did they make the transition to his young successor (whose appointment was a surprise to Ismailis, who had expected Prince Aly Khan to succeed)? Ismaili religious teaching has to overcome these questions and problems if it is to make the imamate credible. In East Africa the Ismailis have been able to bring their doctrines into the classroom, in the community schools. Even in the most elementary of school textbooks, of which a series is published in Gujarati by the Ismaili Association for Africa,

there is a clear chronological distinction made between the theology of Ismailism and the history of the imamate. The theology comes first, in the most elementary books. In some detail it deals with the sacred light (the noor) of Ali, and with its relationship to the imam, a relationship which the following passage illuminates.

> The all-revealing light of Allah has existed since the creation of the Universe. For the enlightenment of the world this holy light became the prophet Adam.
>
> From Adam this pure enlightening light passed from soul to soul into our first imam, Murtzali.
>
> Then from father to son, generation by generation, up to our present 48th imam, Maulana Sultan Mohamed Shah, the sacred imam, this piercing omniscient light has been manifested in the world.
>
> Enemies make constant efforts to douse the holy light, but they are useless, for the sacred flame will never be hidden nor ever put out; it will be perpetually manifest in the world until the end, and will remain until the day of judgment.
>
> When an imam is about to die, he himself hands over the light which is within him to his heir. Just as from one flame another is lit, so each imam has an heir in whom, generation by generation, the holy light is incarnated.
>
> We Imami Ismailis, followers of the present imam, hold sacred the holy light which burns brightly in our imam. In the holy du'a, at the time when we prostrate ourselves, we say, 'Accept our prayers, Noor Maulana Sultan Mohamed Shah, imam,' as we bow down.
>
> Our Ismaili faith is the faith which gives a true understanding of the holy light.
>
> Whom God loves he enlightens through the noor, and he keeps this holy light for ever present in the world through the imam. We do not prostrate ourselves before the physical body of the imam, but before the sacred light.

This is a fairly unambiguous statement, and a strong one. It draws a clear distinction between the physical imam and the sacred light within him, which precedes and survives him. Nevertheless, during his imamate the imam is the authority representing the 'enlightening light'. In the du'a itself these distinctions become a little blurred.

> O Aly, O Muhammad, O Aly. O our present Imam, O our Lord, from you is my strength and you are my support and on you I rely. O Ye who is apparent, O Ye who is present in all existence. O Moulana Shah Karim al-Husayni, you are the true apparent Imam, to your name prostration is due. (English translation by the Ismailia Association of Pakistan).

Elsewhere in the du'a the imam is described as 'the evidence of (God's) authority'. Another passage appears to equate him with Aly -

> There is no deity except Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Aly, the master of the believers, is from Allah, (and he is) our Lord Moulana Shah Karim al-Husayni, the present Imam, in whose name prostration is due.

(It should be pointed out that the expression 'present imam' in English is a neat formula, for it implies both senses of the word 'present'; nonetheless unless the contrary appeared its primary meaning would be 'present in the world', as opposed to 'in office at the moment'.)

In effect the imam is a materialisation of the noor. It is incarnate in him. More, he speaks with its force. As Ismailis say when reminded that they pay no attention to the Koran, 'He (the imam) is our Koran'. 'Holy firman', defined in the constitution as 'any pronouncement, direction, order or ruling made or given by Mowlana Hazar Imam to the community in any Jamatkhana or any communication from Mowlana Hazar Imam specified as a Holy Firman', constitute the mandatory, infallible articulation of the noor. An inspection of an Ismaili jamatkhana tends to drive home the special sense in which the imam is a human being, for the austerity of the room will be relieved only by a multitude of photographs of the imam. These will be of several sizes and variously placed. Yet they are all the same photograph, enlarged more or less. This dizzying repetition makes an ikon of a representation; the image coagulates into a devotional object. In the presence of the imam, he himself is that ikon. He is the material focus of their worship, but he also speaks and thinks and works: he is the 'master of the believers'.

Thus the absolute ascendency of the imam as religious leader and his unfettered power to dispose of community property put him in a position, if he so wills it, to attempt to weld his followers into a coherent, unified whole.[1] But these legal and doctrinal facilities by no means guarantee success, for the source of common property is the community, and the law equally protects them from forced appropriation. In this lies the advantage the East African Ismailis have enjoyed over other Indians there. It is said that at one stage the Ithna Ashariyas attempted to follow their example, but that when the Shah of Persia declined to play a role parallel

1. See also the appendix.

to that of the imam they found themselves unable to carry on - factions developed, and rival councils proclaimed their own legitimacy. Though there may be an element of Ismaili slander in this it does illustrate the advantages of a present imam over a concealed imam. In some ways it is the imamate which is the most striking factor common to the communities in East Africa and Britain. Yet the great differences between the two settlements illustrate the limitations of the institution: the materials upon which it works determine what it can make of them.

Chapter 2

RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION

We have already seen how the first jamatkhanas were instituted in Sind, the Punjab and Kashmir in the fifteenth century under the guidance of Pir Sadr al Din. At that time they seem to have been the central institutions of scattered, semi-independent communities, linked together only through their common allegiance, expressed in terms of dassondh, to the far-distant imam. Probably they reflected local variations in doctrine and practice, but even from that time (at least according to 'Noorum-Mubin') the principal officer was the mukhi. It is possible, as is implied by Arnould's judgment mentioned above, that there was once an elective element in their appointment[1], but as the grip of the imamate has increased in modern times this democratic deviation has disappeared. In East Africa the jamatkhanas are all of the same pattern, and their organisation which, as will be seen, links in closely with the council system, is standardised and under the supervision of a single Executive Council for East Africa. The nearest parallel to this in the earlier system is the 'provincial kamarias' of the Arnould judgment, whose task was to pass on dassondh from the jamats in his province to the imam.

The instrument of standardisation, so far as the formal conditions of appointment and the functions, duties and powers of mukhis and kamadias are concerned, is the constitution.[2] Briefly this amounts to their being made and unmade at the sole discretion of the imam. Thus art. 368 of the constitution -

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1. Trimingham imports this unthinkable possibility into modern East African conditions. This is incorrect: see Trimingham, p. 106.

2. 'The Constitution of the Shia Imami Ismailis in Africa', published by His Highness the Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismailia Supreme Council for Africa, pp. 38-40.

> The first and all subsequent appointments shall be made by Mowlana Hazar Imam.

And art. 373 -

> Mowlana Hazar Imam shall in his absolute discretion make the appointments

These provisions apply to Darkhana (i.e. the principal jamatkhana in each country, namely Nairobi, Kampala and Dar es Salaam) and chief jamatkhanas (i.e. the principal jamatkhanas in each province). The appointment of mukhis and kamadias for suburban jamatkhanas and for mandli are made by the provincial councils concerned. The officers of darkhana and chief jamatkhanas are appointed for two years, the others are generally for one year. The 'functions, duties and powers' of the mukhi and kamadia are defined as follows -

> a) to perform and officiate at all religious ceremonies and rites including those attendant upon birth, marriage, betrothal and death;
> b) to collect Chandraki and Sarkar Sahebi dues PROVIDED THAT no demand for any such dues shall be made at any funeral....;
> c) to control the engagement and dismissal of staff employed in a Jamatkhana other than the staff engaged by the Executive Council;
> d) maintain and supervise the Jamatkhana and Sarkar Sahebi Movable Property under the directions of the Executive Council.

The officers require leave of absence from the provincial council before they may absent themselves from the jamatkhana.

Thus the constitution provides a skeletal outline of the roles of mukhi and kamadia. It will be noticed that there is a financial as well as an administrative and ritual side to these roles. Chandraki and Sarkar Sahebi dues in effect are dassondh ('Sarkar Saheb' means the imam), and although the constitution fails to specify it these are forwarded to the Executive Council. At the same time the mukhis and kamadias of darkhana and chief jamatkhanas are ex-officio members of their respective provincial councils, as are the mukhis of suburban jamatkhanas. Thus the officers of the mosques work under the general supervision of the Executive Council, and at the same time confer with members of provincial councils. A diagram showing these and other connections is included in the next chapter.

The jamatkhana itself, in which most of these duties are carried out, is described by Trimingham as 'a multi-functional community centre'.[1]

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1. Trimingham, p. 104.

Generally it will be a building of two or three storeys, the first floor being reserved for the general confluence of the jamat. Elsewhere there will be a library, the council's committee rooms, offices for the mukhi and kamadia and other rooms where various committees can confer. In general now schools are no longer attached to mosques, having outgrown the space originally allotted them. Sometimes there were sports facilities on the premises, for example badminton courts, but in large jamats these have usually been transferred to a special sports' club. The siting of suburban jamatkhanas may mirror changes in the Ismaili social structure over the last few decades. In Mombasa for example the chief jamatkhana is in the Old Town where most Ismailis used to live in the somewhat cramped conditions associated with its 'quaintness'. Two suburban jamatkhanas have been built, however, one in Makupa to serve the Ismailis living in the large block of community flats, the other in Tudor where the more prosperous element built their own houses. (In consequence the Tudor mosque is far more 'fashionable' than the Makupa one.)

The ritual of the mosque may be considered as involving daily, weekly, monthly and annual cycles. Though, as we shall see, namaz has not completely disappeared from Ismaili observances, the five daily sayings of it have. Instead the du'a is said three times, first at 5 am, and twice in the evening with a short interval in between. The du'a consists of a sequence of six prayers, fragments of which were quoted in the last chapter. East prayer ends with the phrase requiring prostration to the name of the imam. Before the 5 am du'a there is a meeting of one of the devotional mandli, and this begins at 3 am. The hall is arranged with a series of low daises along one wall, called pat,[1] behind which sit, in the centre on each side the mukhi and kamadia and mukhiani and kamadiani (their wives) respectively, and on either side of them the community notables - title-

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1. 'Pāte besavu', according to Belsare et al., means 'to take a seat on a platform for persons of distinction raised near the place where a grand caste-dinner is given', perhaps suggesting the Pir Sadr al Din built his idea of jamatkhanas on Hindu foundations.

holders and even the very elderly - and their wives respectively. In front and facing them over the pāt sits the assembled jamat, the women to the left (as one faces the mukhi) and men to the right. The evening proceedings will usually begin with a ginan, a hymn usually attributed to a pir, one of whose duties was apparently the composition of ginans. Then one member of the jamat, primed beforehand by the mukhi, will lead the first prayer of the du'a. For each prayer there is a special posture to be struck, or a gesture made with the hands. After the first du'a (in the evening) a number of things may happen. Any necessary announcements will be made (which, as will be noted in part II, may well include references to vacant jobs), a ginan will be sung, firmans read (from compilations of firmans, as well as any new ones), and there may be a talika, a message of blessing from the imam. The second du'a follows, and after it what happens depends on the day, the event or the feast. Either before first du'a or after second du'a, or in between, each member of the congregation 'makes du'a', which involves approaching the mukhi (or mukhiani, as the case may be), shaking hands and making an offering of a few cents (which is not to be confused with dassondh). If there is a wa'iz, a hortatory address after the manner of a Church of England sermon, it will occur between the two du'as. After second du'a there is always nandi. This is an auction of food, supposedly cooked in the homes of the congregation and brought to the jamatkhana. As they come in they place it on the pāt, where it lies until the end of the proceedings. The auctioneer is not usually the mukhi himself, just someone good at that kind of thing. Often there is great competition for items known to have been cooked by particular women.

Thus the daily routine of the mosque. In an ordinary week the main departure from it will be nyaj on Friday. Friday is the high day of the week for Muslims in general, and in this at least the Ismailis are no exception. It is the day when attendance is most nearly compulsory, though even in East Africa by no means the whole jamat honours the obligation. Ritually the distinction of the day is marked by nyaj, which takes place immediately after the second du'a, and before nandi, in the evening, and also after the

morning du'a. Nyaj is holy water,[1] and the ritual consists in all the members of the congregation approaching the pāt, receiving a small portion of the nyaj in a small drinking vessel and drinking the contents. Nyaj has been particularly affected by the drive in the last few decades to purge Ismailism of its Hindu elements. Twenty years ago, when there was nyaj on that day the morning du'a was replaced by 'gutpatni du'a', which apparently involved references to the characters of the Bhagavad Gita. This has now disappeared, so that even in the morning, when there is nyaj, the ordinary du'a is said. Irrespective of the day of the week, there is nyaj when a talika is read in the mosque.

Each month is marked by Chandrat, the night of the new moon. Chandrat involves, in addition to the normal cycle of the du'a, the ceremony of chanto, and normally it is the day on which dassondh is paid. There is also nyaj at Chandrat. Chanto is a ceremony of forgiveness for sins unintentionally committed involving sprinkling holy water (not described as nyaj) on the faithful. Each member of the congregation sits in front of the pāt, says a short prayer and is sprinkled with holy water, not by the mukhi or mukhiani but by the other notables - titleholders - of the pāt, who bless the person and his household. After the second du'a at Chandrat there is somewhat of a milling about as people move from chanto to nyaj, and at such a time members of the congregation seek out the mukhi to pay dassondh. This is the major tithe, which all Ismailis are duty-bound to render, and is supposed to be 10 per cent of income. (It is said that if not paid the one-tenth turns to fire and the nine-tenths to wood and together they burn everything one has.) Seven days after each Chandrat there is the fast of Suttee Mano Rojo, which loosely translates at Good Woman's Fast. Those who

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1. Sacralised with the dust of Kerbela, where imam Hussein was assassinated in the seventh century, when the caliphate was lost for the first time. See also Hollister (1953), p. 389.

wish to participate (men may attend) fast before going to the jamatkhana at 10 am. There are ginans, firmans, and the main matter of the day, the reading of a story extolling the virtues of a heroine. Afterwards, at about midday, the fast is broken with nyaj, and all who attend receive a small portion of sweet rice, provided personally by the mukhi and kamadia (who are not the mukhi and kamadia of the jamat but merely of Suttee Mano Rojo, in which it is rather like a mandli, though not exclusive). In former times, when schools were part of jamatkhanas, it could happen that the schoolchildren would contrive to be present to receive the rice, an extra drain on the mukhi's resources.

The main events of the year are the two Idds, Nawroz, Bij, the kushialis, and Leltul Kadar. Moharram is not celebrated. Nawroz, the new year, is a feast day. Like all the other 'big days' it involves nyaj, but is speciality is rojinojuro, a kind of symbolic food which one is meant to keep in the house through the year so as 'never to be without bread'. Bij is merely the special occasion made of a Chandrat falling on a Friday, which should be rather less than twice a year, though because the new moon must actually be seen its date can be manipulated slightly. Bij is an occasion for voluntary fasting. Kushialis are also variable in number, though there are two basic ones, on the imam's birthday, and on the anniversary of his imamate. In 1969 and 1970 there were kushialis on the occasions of the Aga Khan's wedding, and one in celebration of his daughter. Kushiali occasions nyaj, but its main significance is in the social occasion which follows. This involves dandia, a kind of amorphous mass dance. (Each dancer carries a baton (dandio) with which in turn he strikes the batons of partners to either side.) In dandia there is a 'Mombasa style' which is complex enough, and a 'Dar es Salaam style' which is worse, and the genial chaos proportionately greater. Modern dandia is apparently a degenarate form of the very much more elaborate dance of a generation ago. Kushialis also occasion a communal distribution of sweetmeats.

Two Ismaili festivals relate to Ramdan. One of these is of course Ramdan Idd, the feast at the end of Ramdan. On this occasion namaz is said

in the jamatkhana, though in East Africa only the men may attend, together with children (in London women have been allowed to attend namaz). After namaz, which is in the morning, and in addition to the normal du'as, the men and children go from house to house, shaking hands and the children receiving presents. It is a day for the family and the children, a family feast. Though they keep the feast, Ismailis do not fast in Ramdan itself, except voluntarily during the three days of Leltul Kadar, the 21st to 23rd days of Ramdan. Probably very few keep the fast even for these three days, and it is in no sense obligatory. (It is said that 'fasting is a Kacchi thing', a fact attributed to Arab influence in Zanzibar). Leltul Kadar refers to the 23rd night of Ramdan, when there are prayers through the night in the jamatkhana, linking up with the 3 am mandli prior to the 5 am du'a. The evenings of the 21st and 22nd nights are high days rather like kushiali minus dandia, with a special food for the whole jamat and a specially bountiful nandi.[1] Bakri Idd follows much the same pattern as Ramdan Idd. There are again namaz in the jamatkhana, the greetings at neighbours' and friends' houses, and presents for the children.

Two other factors unite all these festivals during the course of the year, and to a lesser extent Chandrat. These are memani and display. Memani are gifts made through the jamatkhana to the imam. They are voluntary and additional to dassondh. Usually they are cash gifts, and the names of the givers are read out in the jamatkhana, with the amounts given. Since the kushialis are most directly related to the person of the imam, these are days notable for memani, but it occurs on other days too.

It will be seen that in memani and nandi, for example, there are already significant elements of display, often explicitly competitive. This does not apply to dassondh, which is handed over unostentatiously to the mukhi, without announcement, but it does apply to other forms of virtue. It applies in fasting, for example, where during the three days of Leltul Kadar those

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1. The emphasis on jamati commensality is notable.

who have attempted the fast will mention the degree of their success. It applies in meditational practices too, for it is all too obvious who slips away from the mosque before the others. But more than elsewhere it applies to dress. An ordinary Friday is an occasion for best suit, dress or (recently) sari, but particularly on kushiali, Idd and Nwroz a splendid attire is called for. Some Ismailis naturally dislike this aspect of the jamatkhana, and rail against it, but little can be done. The display element appears too at weddings, where there was an attempt by the imamate to quell it, with limits prescribed for the number of guests and the gifts exchanged between families. No doubt these fairly tight limits were circumvented in private, but at least they provided an insulation from comment for poor people. One widow was rebuked before the council for having 500 guests at her daughter's wedding, but as people said, by then it was too late, 'and what a wedding!'.

Alongside the activities of the jamat as a whole there exist a number of devotional associations, called mandli or majlas. These tend to meet at the jamatkhana every month. Each has its own mukhi and kamadia, and hence its mukhiani and kamadiani. The mandli are of various types, and may be classified according to the scope of their membership or according to the qualifications for entry. Some of them include nearly everyone, Panch Bar Sal (Five Twelve Year Mandli), for example; others are very small, some because they are exclusive, others because they cater especially for widows or mosque volunteers,[1] for example, who are likely to be on hand at certain times of the day. Their ritual involves usually the singing of ginans, but not the saying of the du'a. There is always some item of food, a juro, shared by the members of the mandli. But in some ways mandli are the locus

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1. The volunteers are a uniformed corps who devote the better part of their day to the mosque - cleaning, cooking (many of the rituals involve food), etc. One of their duties used to be keeping order in the mosque itself, a matter in which they are now redundant. It is a comment on the increasing self-discipline of the jamat that it can now be relied upon to maintain a reverent silence in the mosque.

classicus of competitive consumption. As Morris says -

> The associations (mandli) were internally ranked by grades and initiation into each was by fee and ritual (p. 83)

But in practice this imposes a severe qualification on his view that their membership -

> cut across wealth and class divisions within the sect, and united it in prayer and charitable works around the person of the imam (loc. cit).

The entry fees vary enormously, from nominal sums in the case of mandli such as Panch Bar Sal to five thousand shillings in, for example, the case of Life Dedication Mandli, and far beyond this in other cases (there are at least three mandli above Life Dedication). In fact as top mandli becomes less exclusive (through inflation and increasing general prosperity) others are constantly created above them, with predictable results. The mandli 'hierarchy' is more like a treadmill. In between there are all kinds of intermediate sums, so that one's membership of mandli is a function of resources and devotion. Some of them work on the basis of a percentage on income; a kind of increased dassondh, so that there is a 'one-fourth' mandli. (This kind of basis is not so terrifying as it sounds - it usually means that most members are women who calculate their contributions on their incomes from their husbands. It is by no means unknown for beneficiaries of substantial wills abruptly to terminate their membership of mandli of this kind.) Just as the du'a, and indeed the whole ritual of the jamatkhana, is highly esoteric, so the mandli are somewhat mysterious even among Ismailis. Every Ismaili has a word given him by the imam to meditate upon throughout his life (a word which he must under no circumstances divulge); so the members of each mandli are given a devotional word in addition to this, and there are special firmans for each mandli. This does not mean, however, that one's actual membership of a mandli is unknown - quite the reverse, especially in the cases of the more expensive ones...It is, for example, a fairly common practice for wealthy parents to make their children members of the higher mandli at their marriage, and sometimes even a son's bride (thus Farida and Sadru A in part II). Other people save and scrape for years to finance membership of mandli higher up the scale. In theory

at least this is not because mandli enhance the likelihood of one's salvation. On the contrary, it is always firmly held that all are equal in the sight of God; mandli are merely 'extra opportunities' for prayer or meditation.

Thus in the life of the jamatkhana there are numerous occasions and situations where there is direct competition to excel, and where there is inducement in the form of publicity for the standard achieved. In mandli membership, memani, nandi (where the competition takes the form of culinary prowess), in meditation and fasting, though these are not particularly important, and in dress and demeanour, there is constant mutual observation and evaluation. Perhaps because dassondh is universal, a fixed proportion of whatever income one has, it is not the subject of any emulative drive. This constant competition reaches its most spectacular in weddings and at jubilees, but it is present elsewhere. Because it does not always revolve around economic resources it leaves room for many forms of excellence, some of which are within the grasp of everyone. Each one's own form of excellence is naturally valued higher than another's, so that religious virtuosity is rewarded with the epithet 'fanatic' by laxer groups whose eminence springs from other qualities; and fanatics are at liberty to cry shame on the free-spending habits of their economic betters.[1] These protests need make little difference, for no one is so placed as to legislate upon the evaluation of values, unless it is the imam. The present incumbent, and even shortly before his accession his grandfather, have attempted to moderate it,[2] so that large families will recall sisters married in splendour and others whose weddings were relatively mean. But the tendency towards the former has reasserted itself. Councils of men who have come to the fore in the subtler aspects of the system would have to tread carefully in their criticisms,

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1. Given such conditions it is scarcely surprising that the school system has produced a tremendous will to succeed, to 'stand first' in class, to quantify results and measure superiority.

2. In a firman of October 1957, the present imam said -

> 'Wealth and material blessings are very far from being the only touch stones of true success. The life of a poor man with faith is far more valuable than the life of a rich man with none.'

Best of all, a rich man with faith.

especially if they have unmarried daughters. Thus an interpretation of this competitive ethic which argued that it merely maximised the income of the imamate (or, more subtly, the intensity of meditation and extent of prayer) and was so explained would have to take a cynical view of these unavailing efforts, which would be unwarranted. It is true that mandli, memani and dassondh do directly enrich the communal coffers, and that the proceeds of the nandi auction go to the same purpose. But it would be a gross assumption to imply that competition had somehow been engineered for this purpose.

It was just remarked that the imam might propose to set the record straight on what was meritorious that is, to 'constitute the standards in terms of which more particular evaluations are themselves evaluated'.[1] This he could achieve through his power to create the officers of the jamat and of the councils. What, then, are the qualifications for appointment as a mukhi or kamadia? Quite clearly, from the weight of duty attached to the office no mukhi can be employed, as opposed to being an employer, self-employed or of independent means. He has not only to attend the three daily du'as, but also to be avilable for weddings, funerals and other contingencies and this for a period of two years at least. (Sometimes kamadias succeed mukhis, but usually they do not, and reappointment of mukhis for a second term is rare. Being a mukhi is usually a preliminary to office in the council system, but there is no rule that this must be so). Even a professional would find it overwhelmingly difficult to carry out the role. The result is that the officers of the jamatkhanas tend to be businessmen able to leave their enterprise in the hands of managers, usually kin. There is thus what ammunts to an occupational qualification. Beyond this it is difficult to assess with any precision what criteria are taken into account. As formalised by the constitution, the procedure is that three panels of names are submitted to the imam, one drawn up by the retiring officers, a second by the provincial council and a third by the Executive Council. But the imam may go outside these altogether. One mukhi, who was frankly

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1. Parsons, 1951, p. 14.

stunned by his appointment, remarked that notable piety clearly did not feature in his own eligibility. He was active in the community as an automatic master of ceremonies at kushiali, had written and produced a play in Gujarati (an unprecedented achievement) for the youth association, was a partner with his uncles in a flourishing business, and came of a family which though not enormously wealthy was yet of a high reputation, kandan and genteel.[1] But religious, as he said, he was not, by which he meant that he was no fanatic. He had been divorced and this had involved unpleasant wrangling with the council, and no one could doubt that he was not opposed to moderate amounts of alcohol and tobacco. Above all he was immensely popular in the jamat, with eminent and insignificant, young and old, with the fanatics (who forgave him) as well as with the non-fanatics. Since his term of office he has held a high position in the international Rotary organisation, and is now president of his provincial council. His successor at the mosque was frequently described as fanatic, a point against him for the competitive consumers. Nonetheless he was not unpopular or in the least disliked. He came of what is probably the most collectively powerful family in Ismaili East Africa, had a degree in economics and was a barrister, and managed one of the family hotels. He was very much in earnest about the religious side of his duties, which he epitomised as being 'to represent the Noor' to the jamat. His predecessor had taken the contrary view that his role was to be of service to the jamat.

Most men who are now high in the councils of the community have at one time or another been mukhis or kamadias; it may well be that the imam uses the office to assay his future leaders, but as can be seen from the description above there is no overriding emphasis on one particular kind

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1. 'Kandan and genteel': this is not quite a tautology, but 'genteel' seems to be the English expression closest in spirit. Generally the term applies to families, but individuals in them may be excluded by some. No doubt the content of the term changes with changes in the Ismaili community; today, money, morals and manners all play a part, and no amount of any two of these would entirely make up for the absence of the third. The result is an elusive concept insusceptible to comparison.

of candidate. Through the reports he receives from the Executive Council and from other sources he can estimate his man. But he must work always within the limiting condition that only a narrow stratum is able to fulfil the basic economic qualification for office.

On the Executive Council little can be said. In the constitution its terms of reference and its membership occupy only three cryptic clauses -

> 21. The (Executive) Council shall comprise such Members as may from time to time be appointed by Mowlana Hazar Imam.
>
> 22. Each Member shall hold office during Mowlana Hazar Imam's pleasure.
>
> 23. The Council shall deal with such matters as may be entrusted to it either under the provisions of the Constitution or by Mowlana Hazar Imam.

The matters mentioned in art.23 are vague compared with similar provisions for other councils: the council must arbitrate disputes (if any) between the provincial councils and mukhis over their powers and duties, and supervise the maintenance of the jamatkhanas and 'Sarkar Sahebi Movable Property'. It also plays the aforementioned part in recommending panels for the mosque officers. Its personnel, however, are men who have gained much experience in the administrative structure of the community, none of whom is at present also a member of any of the other councils. Its main function appears to be the handling of community income, in the form of nemani, dassondh, etc., a task which would account for the aura of mystery which surrounds it. Its separation from the main council hierarchy is thus a reflection of the fact that the circulation of community wealth passes directly under the purview of the imam. Because their is no interlocking between the revenue side and the spending and administrative departments, no one is in a position to criticise community budgeting without revealing a breach of confidence. At the same time the duties of the Executive Council are possibly light, though important. Supreme councillors have been heard to use the phrases 'kicked upstairs', or 'put out to grass' or its appointees.

Chapter 3

THE COUNCIL SYSTEM

We have seen how the elaborate system of Ismaili councils touches at several points the organisation of the jamatkhanas, both through the general oversight of the Executive Council and in that the mukhis and kamadias are ex-officio members of their provincial councils. In what follows in this chapter the formal structure of the council system will be set out, together with a brief outline of their activities, and an analysis of the social composition of the councils made. But first a few comments should be made on the origin of the system.

From Hollister's description of the Ismailis in India it is clear that a rather less highly developed form of the East African council system was present.[1] It would be incorrect to infer from this that the councils were imported into East Africa along with the migrants; both organisations have been built up during the course of this century. In East Africa the first attempts to formulate a bureaucratic model for community administration seem to date from 1905, but the modern system flowered fully only after the second world war. In 1952 the then imam called a conference of leading community figures at Evian. The eventual result was that the Holy Laws of the Ismailis were superseded by the constitution mentioned in the previous chapter. In its present form the constitution is the result of a full-scale revision made in 1962 (after a special commission had consulted with leaders from every East African jamat) and of some dozens of amendments added since then. It runs to 557 articles and six schedules; and a preamble which is quoted below, in the appendix. This preamble makes clear its status as a constitution - it is given by the imam, whence its sole authority.

The constitution makes provision for a three-tier council system, the provincial councils, the territorial councils and the Supreme Council. The

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1. Hollister, Chapter XXVI, especially pp. 400-404.

Executive Council, as has been explained, is outside this hierarchy. Associated with each council is a tribunal, provincial, territorial or Supreme. The scope of the whole apparatus is Eastern and Southern Africa (the Congo, Kenya, the Malagasy Republic, Portugeuse East Africa, Ruanda, Burundi, South Africa, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar - the status of some of these territories has since changed), each of which had a territorial council. The territories with which we are most concerned, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, are divided into provinces based on large settlements, three in Kenya, six in Uganda and eight in Tanzania. Three other organisations, constituted independently in each of the three main territories, are highly relevant to the councils. These are the Ismailia associations, education administrations and the departments of members for health. The composition of the provincial councils is most complex, and will be dealt with first. The diagram may serve to simplify matters.

Each provincial council may be described as composed of three elements; representatives from outside organisations themselves directly responsible to the imam; members responsible to the imam through the councils for a variety of local activities; and the presidents and secretaries of the councils. In the first category are the members nominated by the president of the territorial Ismailia association (who will normally be chairman of the local (provincial) Ismailia association), members nominated by the territorial education administrator (usually the chairman of the provincial health committee), and members nominated similarly by the territorial member for health; for purposes of classification, mukhis and kamadias, who are ex-officio councillors, may also be included in this category. In the second category are four members responsible for economic welfare, social welfare, youth organisations and women's organisations. In addition there may be district members, so that for example the Mombasa provincial council included a district member from Aden.

Councillors in the first category are appointed either by the appointees of the imam, or directly by him as mukhis or kamadias. The rest are appointed directly as councillors by the imam. Each appointment lasts

three years, and the council retires as a body. It is required to forward three separate panels of names for its successors to the territorial council shortly before its term expires; these panels are then forwarded to the Supreme Council by the territorial council, together with a fourth panel of its own; the Supreme Council adds a fifth panel and submits all of them to the imam for his decision. Clearly the fact that the provincial councillors have to deliberate on the nomination of competitors for their posts makes them aware of the precariousness of their gloria mundi. Though the imam is entirely free to ignore all recommendations he must generally accept the judgment of his superior councils as to competence at the provincial level. In this way the heads of the three territorial associations dispose of a degree of patronage, as do the members of the upper tier councils.

Each territorial council is composed also of three elements. Again the first element is responsible to the imam other than through the council hierarchy; it comprises the member for health, Ismailia association president and education administrator of the territory. The second category includes the presidents of all provincial councils in the province, together with one other member from each province (who may not be a provincial councillor), as well as three members residing at the place of the council's headquarters. And, third, each territorial council has its president and honorary secretary. Its term of office is the same as that of the provincial councils, and - minus one level - it follows the same procedure in recommending its successors. The Supreme Council follows this pattern of dovetailing hierarchical membership. It comprises the presidents of all the territorial councils (which thus includes those from outside Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), one other member from each territory (who may be neither a provincial nor a territorial councillor), three legally qualified members ('where possible being practising advocates' (art. 26(d))), and a president. Upon the expiry of its three-year term, the Supreme Council submits three panels of names direct to the imam, who then makes his appointments.

Thus the Supreme Council unites a two-tier structure in each territory. In each territory the councils coexist with other organisations which also have two levels; between them there are articulations both at the provincial and the territorial level. The council's activities are thus related to those of the education and health departments, and of the Ismailia associations. The education department administrator is 'directly responsible to Mowlana Hazar Imam for the administration of his department' and deals also with 'other matters as may be entrusted to him from time to time' by the imam (art. 180). Their main task was the oversight of the community's 60 to 70 schools in East Africa, which have now been partly or wholly taken over by the states concerned. However, the Ismailis were able to make some terms, and in Kenya, for example, in 1967 they were still responsible for staff recruitment. The schools remain largely Ismaili schools in terms of intake, but this may not remain for long the case. At the same time the administrators are concerned with financing higher and further education some of the consequences of which we shall see in part II. This means that they dispense bursaries or long-term, interest-free loans to suitably qualified and approved students for courses either in East Africa or abroad. In this they are notoriously non-bureaucratic, and their assessments of need are sometimes hotly contested, though with no formal right of appeal. They are assisted in their work by provincial committees, whose chairmen are usually the administrator's nominees on provincial councils. Education departments are thus able directly to help or hinder aspiring students, and so their families, as far as finance is concerned. Beyond this they are willing to use their power to encourage certain subjects and channel students away from others. Thus they will no longer support law students, because of oversubscription, and will refuse to finance other courses, for example political science or fine art, of which they disapprove. No doubt in this they are supported by decisions of the territorial councils, and also by the imam, but their discretion is very wide.[1] The members for

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1. And see below, p. 160.

health are likewise charged with the maintenance of hospitals and maternity homes in their territories. The community was responsible for building some of the largest and most modern hospitals in East Africa, which to an extent remain within their control; through preferential fees, and this applies to schools as well, the Ismailis are able to dominate their use too. Again, there are local management committees whose chairmen generally occupy the seat reserved on the provincial council.

Finally, the Ismailia association, a more leisured body, is concerned with religious observance in its territory and, according to Morris, with 'propaganda'. On the last, it should be said that the publications for which the Ismailia associations have been responsible have seemed to be aimed at propaganda among Ismailis rather than outside the community. 'Chandrat Patrika' (Chandrat Letter), produced by the Nairobi Provincial Committee of the Kenya Ismailia Association, for example, comes under the bold heading 'Only for Shia Imami Ismailis', and will therefore not be quoted. It is a well-produced, four-page broadsheet, containing a number of firmans, generally, and other articles (including one by the late Bishop James Pike entitled 'Does Your Child Believe in God?'). Chandrat Patrika used also to carry a quiz for children, with multiple choice answers, for example, on the birthplace of the imam, and on whether 'Johnny, Tommy, Yazmina and Azmina' were Ismaili names. (Young Ismailis do frequently become known by English diminutives, Jenny for Zainub, Jack for Akbar, etc., and there are a number of Jimmies and Johns.) Ismailia associations are thus concerned with sharpening the community's perception of its religion. This means combating scepticism too, so that a typical pamphlet published by the Dar es Salaam committe of the Tanzanian Ismailia association carries an article by 'aqi-e Juzvi'' which begins -

> The subject of my article is "Faith and Reason", or the reasonableness of believing in Revelation. And if you ask me why, among the many burning questions of the hour, I have selected this particular subject for disdussion, my answer is this:- It seems to me that as the Rationalists are making it their business to try to persuade their fellows not only that Faith is contrary to reason, but that it leads to mental slavery, it becomes my sacred duty to point out to my fellow-religionists that not only is Faith not incompatible with

reason, but, on the contrary, most helpful to it, and especially conducive to mental freedom.

(This is more a shadow boxing match by a missionary writer than a real reaction to scepticism or widespread apostasy; it has perhaps a prophylactic value - or perhaps the reverse, for little reverence is paid by younger, educated Ismailis to missionaries, usually from the subcontinent, who are seen as obscurantist.) Ismailia associations have also been involved in the general attempt, squarely supported by the imamate, to purge Ismailism of what remains of its Hindu origins, for example the disappearance of gutpatni du'a, and the reintroduction of the Arabic in the ordinary du'a. 'Das Avatar', Pir Sadr al Din's syncretic text, is not now mentioned, for example, though old school books say that he 'proved' that the Hindus' expected tenth incarnation was Ali (without mentioning whose tenth incarnation Ali was supposed to be). Ismailia associations also maintain a religious book depot, whose price list mentions a work called 'Muslims the first Sociologist (sic)', unfortunately out of stock.

Thus the work of three of the members of each provincial council is explained. What of the departments concerned in each province with economic welfare, social welfare, youth organisations and women's organisations? The organisation of these is outlined in the constitution: each 'institution' is 'authorised by, registered with, ...responsible to and...under the control of' the appropriate provincial council (art. 402). Each is to be 'administered by a Committee called "the Managing Committee" appointed by the'provincial council. Each institution submits quarterly statements of account and quarterly reports to the council, which exercises its control through the appropriate member. Thus the bureaucratic formality of the arrangement is complete. I shall refer again in part II to the contrast between the activities of an East African provincial council and those of the London council, but the functions of the 'institutions' represented by these four members of provincial councils ought also to be mentioned here. First, the economic welfare committee is concerned with the investment choices of Ismailis in its province, and also with the labour market. It

thus undertakes surveys of existing potential for investment, which it can attempt to co-ordinate in constructive ways. It acts also as an employment agency, publicising available jobs in the jamatkhana. Second, the social welfare committee offers a range of social security benefits to the poor, unemployed, aged or otherwise needy, being particularly concerned to see that children do not suffer. (According to a former councillor, some 5 to 7 per cent of Mombasa Ismailis are in some way 'needy'.) The social welfare committee also administers the community rest home and its sports facilities (which may be extensive). Youth associations are more concerned with utilising these sporting facilities than maintaining them, arranging fixtures and selecting teams. Most provinces run a wide range of teams in as many leagues as they can find. Usually there will be a literary and debating side to the youth association's activities as well, a valuable introduction to the techniques of public service. Women's associations appear to set out to modernise housekeeping and childrearing techniques. They thus promote classes in cookery, home hygiene, child care and even, it is whispered, ladies' keep fit. In some provinces there are French classes. The member for women's organisations is also concerned in the management of the community's widows' homes.

In all this is revealed an acute community self-consciousness, and the institutional apparatus designed to further the welfare of the whole community along certain tracks. The provincial councils, which meet every week, are required to co-ordinate the work of the various bodies which are subordinate to them, and so far as possible to harmonise this work with that of the specialist territorially organised departments. More important than this, though, is their role as supervisory bodies. Given the role of the imam it becomes a logical necessity that locally active organisations such as these should be checked and their work validated by his representatives as a substitute for himself. This checking and validation then necessarily has itself to be validated, this time by the territorial and Supreme councils, which at the same time are able to take a more detached and wide-ranging view of policy as whole. The territorial and Supreme

councils meet much less frequently, at quarterly intervals. At least three times a year each provincial council must submit a report to its territorial council, which is naturally charged with the duty of co-ordination and supervision of the provincial councils. There is, however, an executive committee of a territorial council which meets every fortnight, comprising the president, honorary secretary, the three members who 'reside at the place where the council's headquarters are situate', and the education administrator, the member for health and the president of the Ismailia association. Like the Supreme Council, territorial councils issue circulars to the lower tier councils, and both councils make reports of their proceedings direct to the imam.

The weighting of the Supreme Council with lawyers is explained by its role with respect to the constitution: it is required to make recommendations direct to the imam, after consulting with the territorial councils, on constitutional amendment, and also to interpret the constitution for the benefit of lower-tier councils, in which, of course, it bears a resemblance to the United States Supreme Court (as the community constitution does not to the constitution of the United States). The territorial councils do not report direct to the Supreme Council, which is thus bypassed in the chain of surveillance.

It was mentioned before that to each council there is a tribunal. The working of these tribunals at all three levels will not be detailed here. Suffice it to say that they are concerned with the enforcement of Ismaili personal law, which in practice amounts largely to family law. The constitution itself codifies and formalises many aspects of this subject: matrimonial causes (polygamy is 'strictly prohibited'); the law relating to infants; betrothal and dower; apostasy (a ground for divorce); and exogamy. Discretionary powers to dissolve marriages inhere in the council (which must approve the findings of its tribunal) in any case, and explicitly where there are no children of the marriage after six years. Appeals lie from inferior tribunals to superior ones. A limited right of representation

exists, though only another Ismaili may be the representative. Members of tribunals are appointed in the same way as members of cognate councils; the tribunal chairman is invariably a lawyer, and at least one woman sits with him.

The effect of the councils is thus to bureaucratise the formation of social capital within the community. Under the aegis of the imamate there is a sharp disjunction between private capital and public resources. Both legally and ideologically the latter inhere in the imam himself, so that whatever benefit they bring to the community is attributable to him. There is no scope for competition with the imamate in this respect, so that prominence is always the creation of the imam. At the same time the formal properties of bureaucratisation ensure that for Ismailis the problem of public probity is minimised, that investment in social capital is routinised and that a high level of co-ordination and efficiency can be maintained. But the bureaucracy itself cannot be regarded merely as a neutral instrument of the policies of the imamate. The administrators are at the same time members of the community. As such their position must be discussed from the point of view of the personal power which enters into their practice as administrators, and, if as is the case they are recruited from a stratum within the community, the effect of the bureaucracy on group relations among the Ismailis. Such a discussion can provide an insight into the motivation of the bureaucrats, though the ideological forms in which this motivation is expressed cannot be reduced to the aspiration to power which nevertheless underlies it.

At the level of personal power entering into the role of community administrator, we have already seen that there are elements of patronage built into the system. The provincial councils appoint the managing committees of the 'institutions'; certain members of provincial councils are appointed by education administrators, members for health and presidents of Ismailia associations; the territorial and Supreme councils may be deduced to have some influence over the imam in recommending panels for lower-tier councils. (Though on the last it should be said that the belief

that there is a key group effectively making appointments is discounted by a Supreme councillor as the result of 'some people liking to think' that they enjoyed a special confidence: 'and liking others to think so too', it might be added.) Beyond this it has been pointed out that since administrative acts are always more specific than the power which authorises them the administrator's decisions must contain an element of political (at whatever level) choice.[1] In the present case the example of granting bursaries might be given, or the waiver of school and hospital fees, but in the main the decisions and choices made by the lower-tier councils at least are not with respect to individuals. Where they are inevitably so concerned, in the tribunals, there is a comprehensive system for review reaching to the imam himself.

The question remains as to the recruitment of councillors. In the following table, an analysis of the composition of certain councils is given in terms of occupation and also in terms of directorates currently (1967) held in the community's financial institutions (discussed in the next chapter).

Composition of councils

Council	number	directorates	business	professional	employed
Supreme	10	9	5	3	-
territorial	20	6	16	3	1
provincial	16	1	11	6	-

These crudely analysed figures are derived from the memberships of the Supreme Council, the territorial councils of Tanzania and Uganda and the provincial councils of Nairobi and Mombasa. They involve a certain amount of double-counting where, for example, a man is both a practising lawyer and also a property owner and dealer (though probably all the professionals have a rent income to some extent); and in the case of the president of the Supreme Council, who is also chairman of the board of Jubilee Insurance

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1. Lockwood, in Zollschan and Hirsch, 1964, p. 246(n).

and a member of that of Diamond Investment Trust. Nine of the twelve professionals are either lawyers or accountants.

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between these figures and the composition of the economically-active Ismaili population of East Africa as a whole. Though regular censuses are taken in the provinces the results are not available.[1] Neither are there any figures compiled by the states which separate out the Ismailis from other categories specifically. In very broad terms, however, some comparison is possible. This depends on the assumption that Mombasa is fairly typical of Ismaili East Africa, which may not be too outrageous bearing in mind that it contains about 12 per cent. of the East African Ismaili population, and that a very large proportion of the remainder reside in towns of comparable size (Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Kampala, etc.). The statistics derive from the then president of the provincial council, with access to the census returns and prompted to make estimates, which were as follows.

Working population (Mombasa)

	company directors	self-employed businessmen	professionals	employed	unemployed/ incapacitated
%	15	20	5	50	10

Amalgamating the first two categories, and the last two, and comparing the result with the composition of the councils, we arrive at the following.

Social specificity of council personnel

	business	professional	employed/unemployed/ incapacitated
Community at large	35	5	60
Councils	72	26	2

1. Information requested in censuses goes beyond numbers and occupation to inquire after property, investments and income, and whether the respondent is contemplating new investments.

Despite the dubious methods by which this comparison is derived, the overwhelming disparity between the councils and the community at large is clear. Naturally Ismailis are not unaware of this situation, and councillors themselves tend to justify it by saying either that community leaders must be tried and trusted men - it just happens that they are usually in business, or else that the sacrifices required are beyond those not master of their own time ('We do not burden those in employment with office', as a member of a territorial council put it).

Though a system of this kind is especially vulnerable to the dissent of the 'governed', because it has no legal sanctions at its disposal and hence no force, it can nevertheless mount formal sanctions in order to compel compliance with its directives. It must, for example, be able to secure respect for the decisions of the tribunals, and also acquiescence in many other matters. The councils are therefore provided with disciplinary powers, the right to fine or excommunicate or merely to reprimand or require an apology before the jamat. Only the last two of these have recently been applied in practice, for informal sanctions may be more efficacious.[1] Under the constitution, a variety of misdemeanours may render an Ismaili liable to disciplinary action, for example resisting the council, purporting to represent the community or the council, slandering or libelling the imam or irreverently ridiculing the Ismaili faith. The punishment for apostasy is automatic ostracism, a fate awaiting the excommunicate as well -

> 220. No Ismaili other than the immediate family members of a person who has been excommunicated shall have any social or any other association with him.
>
> 329. No Ismaili shall have religious, social or any other association with an Apostate.

These are reserve powers.

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1. Though it is said that a girl who married out and renounced Ismailism was excommunicated. I have been unable to substantiate this.

Thus the council system administers many of the social and other benefits available to an Ismaili by virtue of his faith. It is manned almost exclusively in its upper echelons (I have not considered the local committees) by members of the business strata whose honorary positions make considerable demands on their time and perhaps their purses as well (recently extraordinary expenses have become indemnifiable by the councils). Moreover these men will have rendered themselves eligible for service by attending to their reputations both as family men and in the jamatkhana. This means dassondh, memani and mandli. The cost of notability is notable.

Because Ismailis are committed to economic and social progress within their community (explicitly in the constitution), and because in this, by circumstances and through the old Aga Khan, they have taken Britain as a model, they are aware that their councils may be criticised as 'undemocratic' To this they respond, basically, in three ways, 'traditionalist', 'administrationist' or 'populist': the first asserts the right of an imam who can choose his successor so appoint a mere councillor; the second that the system works so that no need to question it arises; third, that no demand for any elective element has ever been articulated - hence the system is democratically valid anyway. The second argument is supplemented by a Supreme Councillor: 'We do not represent interests', implying that in the absence of conflict the councils are merely a technical apparatus for carrying through what is in the interests of the community as a whole.

Chapter 4

THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

During the course of this century the East African Ismailis have built up an array of institutions which consolidate and allocate a part of the capital developed within the community. That is to say, in place of the multitude of investment decisions which would have been taken by individuals or families in the absence of these institutions, the community has undertaken to rationalise, channel and stimulate the flow of capital as a whole. In this chapter the development of these institutions will be described, and their mode of control will be discussed and related to other types of Ismaili organisation. I am in possession of no data which would allow a direct assessment of the effect these economic instruments have had for Ismailis as opposed to other Asian groups.

Though efforts had been made from the early years of the present century to lay the basis of financial co-operation within the community - in the form of housing co-operatives and non-permanent building societies - it was not until the 1930s that the decisive intervention of religion in economics made possible the first of the present large institutions. Imam Sultan Mohamed Shah, Aga Khan III, reigned for over 70 years. As was mentioned above, the imam's birthday and the anniversary of his accession occasion kushialis, and so memani. The late Aga Khan's three jubilees, in 1935, 1945 and 1955, were events of great magnitude. Each jubilee produced memani on an enormous scale, and the imam was weighed against gold, diamonds and platinum.[1] The legal status of these funds was, of course, that they were personal possessions of the imam, but he decided to put them at the disposal of the community. According to Morris he first consulted with his

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1. His weight varied between 15 and 16 stones.

East African lieutenants as to how the golden jubilee monies should be deployed, but overruled their desire to found a communal bank.[1] Instead the Jubilee Insurance Co. was set up.

Jubilee Insurance functions in two ways. First it is an ordinary insurance company taking on all classes of business, as its prospectus proclaims, embracing 'business from all Communities, and assures equitable treatment to all without any distinction of colour, caste or creed.'[2] On the other side, however, its investments are to a large extent in Ismaili enterprise, though there was a £5,000 limit. As at 31st December, 1965, its capital was £200,000 made up of 100,000 paid up £1 shares (presumably the form in which the golden jubilee monies are held), and 100,000 £1 cumulative preference shares. Its main assets were £1.2m. of investments in the form of mortgages on fixed assets, and £650,000 in loans and advances secured by companies'policies.[3] Against this it held in all only £530,000 in the securities of East African and other Commonwealth governments and in public companies registered in East Africa, even though this represented a considerable shift from loans to securities over the previous year. Jubilee Insurance, whose head office was in Mombasa, was also an employer of Ismailis. Together with its branches in the three East African capitals it probably employed over 200 of them. But its senior management was non-Ismaili, in the persons of its managing director and two executive directors. Of its directorates the prospectus declares that it is 'representative of the most prominent gentlemen well-known throughout East Africa'; they are all Ismaili. According to one of its officers, 75 per cent. of the insurance side of the business is done with Ismailis.

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1. Morris (1956), p. 200.

2. Jubilee Insurance Co. Ltd., 'Prospectus', p. 4.

3. Nearly £50,000 in loans secured by mortgages on fixed assets was recorded as 'due by concerns in which directors have an interest', Jubilee Insurance Co. Ltd., annual report, 1965.

When launched in 1937 Jubilee Insurance was a great success. Its shares seem to have been distributed very widely through the community, though precise figures are not available. Because he holds a large part of the share capital the Aga Khan is able to exercise full control over the preference shareholders. This means that the directors do not themselves have to be large shareholders in order to secure their positions on the board, a fact which has allowed Jubilee Insurance to operate a low-dividend policy without too much strain. As with Diamond Investment Trust, investment in the share capital of Jubilee Insurance has always been seen as something of a service to the community. Such shares are unlikely to be attractive to outside investors, and in 1965 the whole of the share capital was owned by Ismailis.

As its name implies, the Diamond Jubilee Trust, Ltd., was founded on monies collected at the Aga Khan's diamond jubilee in 1945. Though its business was quite different from that of Jubilee Insurance, in practice it was a similar device at the level of the community as a whole. That is to say, it accepted deposits from a largely Ismaili public, on which it paid interest, and invested funds in on the whole Ismaili enterprise (and later on in its history in housing). Diamond Investment Trust operated with an issued share capital of £1m., of which the Aga Khan held 20 per cent in addition to the jubilee funds of £300,000. For the rest there were 7,000 shareholders, of whom 70 per cent, held parcels of £100-£150 worth of shares, thus giving the Aga Khan negative control. In any case, according to its assistant general manager, its annual general meetings were poorly attended. The company was incorporated in Tanzania and registered in Kenya and Uganda, the full board consisting of four representatives from each country.

The company's investments were to a large extent in Ismaili commercial enterprise until the 1950s. At this time the then Aga Khan launched the 'homes for all' scheme, under which Ismailis were enjoined to have become owner-occupiers by 1960. At the platinum jubilee of 1955, therefore, nearly £300,000 was added to the 'Aga Khan III Gift Fund', which formed

part of Diamond Investment Trust's capital, and the company switched to providing housing finance up to a £2,500 limit. This was linked with the construction of large blocks of Ismaili flats in the main population centres, blocks which were graded by price and amenity, and in some cases jamatkhanas and other services to go with them. These blocks were built by Ismaili builders. The homes-for-all scheme was largely successful, so that by 1967 85 per cent. of Ismailis were owner-occupiers, though perhaps with outstandin mortgages. In 1961 Industrial Promotion Services, Ltd. was incorporated in Kenya and registered in the other territories. IPS was intended as a technical services concern, designed to assess the prospects of industrial investment projects put up to it, and to seek out other likely possibilities. As such it was an employer of technically-qualified Ismailis and its existence made degree courses in, for example, statistics and economics a more attractive possibility. The relationship between IPS and Diamond Investment Trust was complex, but basically the idea was that the latter company, which together with the Aga Khan owned 75 per cent. of the share capital in IPS, would make funds available for approved projects. Thus Diamond Investment Trust ceased to be a source of small commercial capital. Though it was only responsible for a part of the capital involved, IPS of Tanzania had been responsible for nearly £2.5m. of investment in that country in the three years before the government took a 25 per cent interest in it.[1]

In 1966 Diamond Investment Trust underwent a major re-organisation. This was really a matter of ensuring that control remained with the community at a time when it was no longer possible to restrict the shares to Ismaili ownership. The jubilee funds were returned to the Aga Khan, though he redeposited some £370,000 with the company in cash, leaving an overall loss to the trust of £225,000 in shares in the IPS group. Diamond Investment Trust was broken up between the three territories, and its effective control

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1. Daily Nation (East Africa), 1967. IPS (Tanzania) was there said to have invested in 'companies producing pharmaceuticals, textiles, blankets, nails, clothing, suitcases, and primus stoves'.

transferred to Diamond Investment Services, Ltd., (which had a share capital of £20, divided as to £17 held by the Aga Khan and £3 by Diamond Investment Trusts, £1 by each company in each territory). At the same time the company increased its holding in shares on the East African stock exchange by nearly 240 per cent (at cost), no doubt to good effect for the community's reputation in governmental circles (Jubilee Insurance was also increasing its stock holdings). But the effect of the intervention of IPS is revealed in the fact that between 1965 and 1966 the total loans shown in the Diamond Investment Trust balance sheet fell from £2.3m. to £1.9m. (again the same pattern was reflected in Jubilee Insurance).

Thus it can be seen that the evolution of the financial institutions had reached an interesting hiatus by the mid-1960s. Instead of providing loan capital in small parcels for the extension of small businesses, they had turned to investment in the stock market on the one hand, and the financing of IPS industry on the other. IPS was concerned to promote enterprise on a large scale, preferably manufacturing industry, very much in line with the many pronouncements of the Aga Khan that the modernisation of the East African economy was of paramount importance. Diamond Investment Trust itself was being managed much more as a commercial enterprise, having increased its dividend target from three or four per cent. to seven per cent (explained as the result of an unwillingness by those inheriting shares to continue to regard them as charitable). Correspondingly loan charges were raised to 9 per cent. Despite this the firm remained highly conscious of its community role, which is scarcely surprising in view of its directorate (even its assistant general manager was a Supreme Councillor). It followed a policy of spreading out loans between families, and could have managed with far fewer staff were it not for this. Its low rate of dividend was justified by the argument that there were about as many shareholders as Ismaili families in East Africa; given the loan-spreading policy, therefore, what was lost in dividends was gained in cheap capital (a highly specious logic is involved). Despite this in the mid-1960s Diamond Investment Trust was in competition for Ismaili funds. The directors wrote in their 1965

annual report -

> The fall in deposits is attributable to full use being made of surplus funds by the Community in trading and commerce. Furthermore, demands on the saving of the Community have been made by the flotation of other companies, in which there are large Ismaili shareholdings (sc. IPS enterprise) (p.2).

The channelling of community capital into largescale industrial enterprise rather than into small business brings with it something of a shift in the pattern of community benefit. Since the investment of large capital requires a great deal more managerial and technical expertise, it seems likely that increasingly only those Ismailis already having relevant experience, that is those already prosperous in business, will be able to benefit as partners with IPS, as opposed to benefiting by being employed in the enterprises so created. (An East African Asian observer from outside the community already saw IPS itself as mollifying young malcontents with the consolations of good jobs in a community institution).

We have seen how effective control in the community's financial institutions is vested in the imam. In the last chapter the section of the community which dominated the council system was mentioned, under the final authority of the imam, and the same pattern is repeated in the financial institutions, although formally they are public companies, subject to the democratic control of their shareholders. The directorates of the companies are composed of men who hold high positions in the council system, more or less on a regularised basis. The following table shows the extent of this.

Directorates - other offices held

	SC	EC	TCs	PCs	JI	DIT	n
Diamond Investment Trust	3	-	3	3	2	-	11
Jubilee Insurance	4	1	4	1	-	2	10

The table shows a very high degree of interlocking between the councils and the financial institutions (data for IPS not available). The chairman of the board of Jubilee Insurance, who also sits on the board of Diamond Investment Trust, is president of the Supreme Council. The presidents of all three territorial councils are members of the board of the Jubilee Insurance. As might be expected, they are overwhelmingly (over 80 per cent)

in business, and the rest professionals - lawyers and accountants. The businessmen who sit on the boards of these companies are not shopkeepers: on the contrary most of them are extremely wealthy men as landlords, hoteliers and as retailers in the sense of owners of chains of shops or garages. They are also interrelated to an extent, so that several members of the family of the mukhi mentioned above (Chapter 2, p.40) have been or are members of the two boards, while the son-in-law of the president of the Supreme Council sits with his father-in-law on the board of Diamond Investment Trust. Most have one or other of the titles awarded by the imam for 'meritorious service to the community' (though in former years the system appears to have become an auction).[1]

It will be recalled that the problem of impartiality in administration was raised in connection with the councils, where it was argued that the ability to represent equitable dealing as a duty to the imamate helped absolve community leaders from pressures which might otherwise have been fatal to the possibility of such elaborate organisations handling large amounts of communal capital. In the case of the financial institutions the problems are clearly greater, in view of the discretion of the directorates over loan policy and over the detailed allocation of loans. In fact it did happen that the directors of one of the companies were found to have displayed partiality in this direction, capitalising their own concerns from community sources. It was at this point that non-Ismaili management was brought in by the imam in both Jubilee Insurance and Diamond Investment Trust, though only at the most senior levels.

In the councils, in the financial institutions, in the offices of the jamatkhana, and in the system of titles the leaders of the community are drawn from the most successful men of the business and professional strata. But it is not by virtue of their wealth that they have achieved their

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1. These titles are graded from Diwan through Count downwards. There is only one Diwan in East Africa. He was on very close terms with the last Aga Khan; his son is a newly-appointed member of the London council.

eminence. They have risen through their participation in the competition to serve the community. In the guise of making gifts to the imam as memani, through honouring their obligations with respect to dassondh, and by sacrificing their time to serve as mukhis (which many of the directors of the companies and many upper-tier councillors have done) and kamadias, and in their devotion as expressed through the mandli hierarchy they must be philanthropists of some magnitude. No doubt the bigger they grow in community office the more their private concerns prosper, through the information which comes their way, the contacts they make and the enhanced reputation they derive.[1] Even so, the end result of their drive to rise in the community is administrative office more or less onerous in its duties which they are expected to fulfill with unflinching impartiality. More than this, they are expected to preside over a redistribution of community income whose source is to a large extent a system of levies on their own pockets. The result is that the Ismailis have prospered as a community in a fashion impossible were there no way of guaranteeing the probity of public life through the imamate, or had successive imams been content to allow their followers to arrange their own affairs unsupervised.

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1. There are cynics who will argue that this is the only motivation, referring especially to the degree of contact with government officials high community office affords. On the other hand at least one mukhi seemed convinced that his business prospered as a direct result of divine intervention rewarding his public service.

Chapter 5

'WESTERNISATION' AND THE IMAMATE

Ismailis are not a cross-section of East African society, which is largely based on peasant cultivation and pastoralism. Neither are they statistically a cross-section of the 'modern' sector. They are nevertheless of this economic enclave in that the productive relations in which they are active are capitalistic. Within this sector, however, they are extremely diverse, the community embracing fractions of all classes: owners of big commercial and industrial capital; rentiers; professionals; white-collar salaried workers and wage workers; and the unemployed. We have already seen how the significance of these distinctions is transformed within the community but not dissolved by it, so that the owners of capital and the professionals between them dominate the positions of power and prestige. Through the institutions in which their dominance is formally located - the councils, the community companies andthe jamatkhanas - they have presided over the formation of social capital, in the form of hospitals, schools etc., and the stimulation of private capital accumulation in the operation of the companies' loans policies. In doing this they have overcome the polarity between shortrun private advantage and longrun community advantage in favour of the latter; and the process depended on a greater value being substituted for that of shortrun economic accumulation, a value which itself had to be both private and shortrun.

Given this it remains to establish the logic of the dominance of the community bourgeoisie, for the only explanation mentioned so far, that no other group would have been able to afford the time, has an ideological ring to it. Second, the role of the imamate in rewarding certain types of achievement above others and in particular ways should be assessed, for our purposes as much from the detailed values which were held by Ismailis migrating to Britain as for the effect it has had on the Ismailis' external relations in East Africa.

In theory dassondh is a universal obligation of all Ismailis, while

memani are ex gratia expressions of devotion to the imamate. To hold a stake in the financial institutions is only to follow the imam's example and his manifest wish. To become a mukhi or kamadia is merely to take a central role in the ritual of a profound religion to which all Ismailis are committed. All these disinterested motivations, active as they undoubtedly are, would be able to make the system work; but alone they would leave entirely open the question of who would operate the system. In fact we have found that the question is not open, but resolved in favour of the community bourgeoisie. An imam whose firmans assert the priority of faith over wealth (see p.38(n.)) nonetheless presides over a structure whose recruitment appears to favour money above piety. Before attempting to see why this is so, it is important to be clear that this is not a matter of the domination of the bourgeoisie as such, for Ismaili society is not society as such; though there are employers and employed they are not necessarily employed by and employers of, each other, many Ismailis, for example, working for expatriate concerns, and many Ismaili employers having largely non-Ismaili labour forces. It is not merely that an economically dominant fraction of the community has asserted its political control as well. What distinguishes the administrators from the others is their power as consumers, not as producers and employers. Could it be otherwise?

In principle the question is always posed in the form of why the poor cannot be included in the dominant group, why they cannot administer. It might be more profitable to inquire, on the contrary, why the wealthy cannot be treated as ordinary, as members of the rank and file of the community, at least for political purposes. It would then be possible to see that the structure of exchange within the community would be severely and probably fatally prejudiced. In such circumstances the wealthy would reap the benefits of being ordinary Ismailis which, as we have seen, are medical services, mortgages, education for their children, small-scale business finance, and perhaps most important a guaranteed credit-worthiness (guaranteed by public submission to community control). But these things are precisely what the wealthy of the community already possess; for them

there are no special privileges in the material services which the community offers the bulk of its members. Yet the strong adhesion of such men is essential for these benefits to be possible at all, for it is from them that the knowhow of organisation and to a large extent the income which makes social capital formation possible derive. So it is that the positions of public service must be reserved for them, in order that they can receive the commodity which the community alone can offer them, prestige.

Had there been other avenues by which Ismaili wealth might have translated itself into public recognition, the present form of the community in East Africa might not have been possible. But successive governments have excluded them from positions of national pre-eminence. For their part the Ismailis have (from this point of view, very logically) sought to minimise any catholic standards of public estimation - if Ismailis had been widely active in KANU, TANU or the UPC for example, the specie in which their own leadership was emolumated would have been devalued. East African communalism has not merely an external logic, in which it appears as aggressive or defensive, but also an internal logic which is the real root of its power. If public recognition were available outside the community, the monopoly of the community, and therefore its hold over its foremost men,would be lost.

It would be wrong to overemphasise the status adhering to public service at the expense of other kinds of prestige. As we have seen, religious virtuosity, in fasting and meditation, also has its value. In nandi the domestic skills of Ismaili women are pitted against one another, so that there is public honour for culinary prowess. But the point remains that in the deference awarded community notables lies the immediate rationality of their attachment. The point might be expanded in connection with the question why the East African Ismaili community so much resembles the total society which at the economic level it is not. For in one way and another each identifiable category within it

is singled out for public competitive assessment: as economically active, where the prize is office; as housewives where traction arises in the nandi auction (and elsewhere, of course); as technologically or professionally qualified people, who may compete for jobs in IPS and the concerns it has sponsored; as exponents of religion, recggnised in the Ismailia associations; even as children, who compete for the role of mukhi and mukhiani of the children's mandli, than which last probably no competition is fiercer.

If the foregoing analysis is broadly correct, it follows that the field of choice from which the imam draws his bureaucracy is constrained by economic considerations. Nevertheless this is not to say that all choice is thereby obliterated. In the whole of the three countries there are only about 400 offices (not counting 'institutions' supervised by provincial councils), which means that at any one time many Ismailis eligible on economic grounds will be out of office, and the actual office-holding group will be only a tiny minority even of the economically independent. The imam does have this range of choice. In the way he uses it he is able to influence more than the personnel of his apparatus, but also other dominant values within the community as a whole, for it is not only in the economic life that qualification for community office is then to be sought. Sultan Mohamed Shah seems to have been clear as to the values he wished to encourage through his power of selection, but he also emphasised similar values in his more general advice to his community. These values can be summarised as 'westernisation', more particularly as 'anglicisation'. Most noticeably the former Aga Khan instructed his followers in East Africa to make the English language their mother tongue, a policy which resulted in the ending of Gujarati in the Aga Khan schools, and thus a generation illiterate in any Indian language (with the result that many Ismaili students in Britain have had difficulty in writing to their mothers, who often speak little English and read none). In the last few years Gujarati has been restored to the syllabus, but not, as formerly, as the medium of instruction. In other things too the imam

encouraged a western style of life. For example, because of his 'great wish' that Indian dress be abandoned, it was for a long time an embarrassment to wear a sari in the jamatkhana, and the midi length was long ago adopted as a compromise for elderly ladies. Morris records that in the nineteenth century Indian women returning from East Africa donned the veil as they approached home territory; today an Ismaili girl visiting East Africa from London would disdain to lengthen her skirt on any ground other than changing fashion. Men invariably wear western dress. In housing the adoption of western standards - in design, space, individual privacy, furniture, etc. - followed partly from the remarks he made on the upbringing of children - how they should be separated from the storm-centre of family life for proper sleep, school work and so on - but also from the introduction of the norm of owner-occupation and because patrilocal residence was not a powerful convention (though a token few months after marriage is common); young people were able in their homes to set the standards for their elders. In all this the prominent men were leaders, because to be westernised was recognised as meritorious by the Aga Khan. If the Ismailis were dragged into the twentieth century there was little kicking and screaming.[1] To aspire in the hierarchy of community offices a man had to emulate those already in office, not only in wealth and munificence but also in the everyday conduct of his life, his home, his family relationships, and even in the upbringing of his children. The system ensured that the community leaders were more than men with power in the formal bureaucracy, or influential through their wealth, but that they were models of what it was desirable for an Ismaili to be and become.

The policies of recent imams have been discussed as though it were self-evident that they would attempt to maximise the economic potential of their followers in East Africa. And in a sense it is self-evident, for the richer his followers, the richer and more prestigious (within the community and in the world at large) an imam. But, prosperous Ismailis must continue to be Ismailis. In this

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1. There is evidence that some Ismailis shared the view of many non-Ismaili Asians in East Africa, that they were becoming excessively materialistic; but this view has not prevailed.

respect the imams have tended to see the wealth of their followers not so much as an end in itself, but as a condition of their independence. In his 'Memoirs', Sultan Mohamed Shah wrote that since his grandfather settled in Bombay, there had been 'no fundamental or violent change in the Ismaili way of life or in the conditions in which my followers can pursue their own religion' (p. 183). In 1960 his successor defined his aims in the following passage from a speech to an Ismaili audience -

> I am pushing you to develop your own schools, your own education, your own health boards, but I am doing this because...Islam means not only faith but it means work, it means creating the world in which you can practise your faith to the best of your ability and to practise your faith you must be able to do this; to create the world in which you can practise ('Speeches', p. 26)

Immersed in this declaration is a concept of Ismaili communities in various countries maintaining a degree of autonomy in material life the better to maintain a religious autonomy. But for East Africa the policy of the imamate designed to achieve just this autonomy at the level of the individual Ismaili has changed, and changed in consonance with the development of the autonomy of the community as a whole.

Sultan Mohamed Shah was concerned to build up the involvement of his followers in commerce. In his time the choice for Ismailis was between employment or being in business on their own account, the imam coming down resolutely for the latter option. The financial institutions were clearly related to this aim. Something like Macpherson's (1962) concept of 'possessive individualism' lay behind this drive, the notion that

> Freedom from dependence on others means freedom from any relations with others except those relations which the individual enters voluntarily with a view to his own interest (p.263),

it being understood that the relations referred to are with non-Ismailis. For the assumption of possessive individualism that 'what makes a man human is freedom from dependence on the wills of others' (loc. cit.) the Ismaili version would read 'what makes a man fully able to live Ismailism is freedom from dependence on the wills of non-Ismailis'. But commerce as a solution to the problem of achieving this freedom did not survive. It disappeared at the triple conjuncture of independence for the

East African territories, the accession of a new imam, and the founding of IPS. The fourth Aga Khan put the new policy succinctly -

> I don't want those children who are passing their matriculation exams to be put in business if they wish to go for further studies ('Speeches', p. 37).

Again, he told the Muslim Mindanao University in the Philippines -

> I am now deeply convinced that man's position in society will depend less and less on his cultural or family heritage and more and more on the power and development of his mind (ibid., p. 110)

In short, in a period when social revolution was on the agenda in many parts of the world where Ismailis lived, neither property nor descent were any longer guarantees of the independence of his followers from the hegemony of non-Ismaili forces; the new solution was to substitute for the alienable resource of capital the inalienable capital of education.

This change fitted in with the evolution of the community economy which, as we have seen, was at this time switching from the financing of smallscale business for many Ismailis to the capitalisation of industrial projects through IPS. As such Ismailis were able to benefit from these enterprises either as promoters (IPS capital was always in partnership with private capital, not all of it Ismaili capital) or as managerial or technically qualified staff. The corollary was that community resources were deployed for the education of young people, and this had principally to be abroad. We shall see some of the consequences of this in part II, but in East Africa it meant that from the late 1950s education as such achieved a new priority over business, and that subjects which it was possible and laudable to study were no longer restricted to those professions which made of their practitioners a kind of businessman: the law, medicine, dentistry, etc.

In these ways then the Ismaili community in East Africa provided it s members with a degree of 'anticipatory socialisation' relevant to settlement in Europe and North America, particularly for settlement in Britain. In dress, in housing and in childrearing it brought them close to the English pattern. It equipped them with the linguistic skills necessary for life in Britain, and it did not restrict these skills to

a few highly educated children. It introduced the notion of education fitting them for work in a bureaucracy in whose ownership they did not share; enterprise in their own community was becoming increasingly large-scale, forcing them to come to terms with the prospect of a career in industrial bureaucracy. Behind all this there was a concept of the public weal as opposed to the private good, a relationship in which all was not on the side of the latter. East African Ismailis were aware that the community as a collective entity entered deeply into their lives in a way which was thought of as highly beneficial, and were thus readied for the state to play an analogous role in Britain. They were also inured to the process of consumption as a means of expressing status, and in their background the items of consumption which had come to bear most prestige were associated with the community's anglicisation.

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If there is one theme which unifies the foregoing chapters it is that the East African Ismailis have been able to handle resources at the level of the community as a whole. In examining the religious institutions it becomes clear that a system of revenue is involved; in the council system we can see at work the process of allocation between consumption (in the form of social security benefits) and social capital formation (schools, hospitals, sports facilities, jamatkhanas and educational bursaries). In the community companies we can see the collective utilisation of investible surpluses for the capitalisation of businesses, for housing and later on for industrial investment. Throughout there is an opposition between the collective and the private, an opposition resolved to an extent by the intervention of religion in economic life. But this opposition is resolved only to an extent, and this must be borne in mind in considering the postwar Ismaili migration to Britain, for the contradiction remans active in the London jamat.

One aspect of this migration emerges from what has already been said. If anglicisation and education were both values within the East African community then a logical way to underscore one's adherence to them, at

the same time establishing one's economic repute and laying a claim to the future eminence of one's family, was to have children educated in England, at school, in the university or both. The flow of students after the war accordingly gathered pace, and was initially financed by private sources. Equipped with a degree or a professional qualification from England, a man stood to go far in the community hierarchy - and thus to be a credit to his family, directly improving their standing. The early migration thus marked a perfect consonance between public and private ends. But this was scarcely a migration. When settlement in Britain began it implied that other ends than those immediately relevant to the community as a whole were being pursued. In the following chapters the community in Britain will be described, and from this material it should be possible to show how tensions within the East African community are expressed in this country.

PART II

BRITAIN

Chapter 6

THE MIGRATION TO BRITAIN

The migration of Ismailis to Britain is one which in some respects follows the pattern of the widespread postwar movement from the former Imperial territories to the metropolis. Before 1945 there seems to have been no settlement here by Ismailis, though there had been a number of students at the Inns of Court and in other professional schools even in the 1920s. Aga Khan Sultan Mohamed Shah had himself been a frequent visitor to Britain since Victorian times, but he was without any following in this country. After the war this changed. In the case of the Ismailis it seems possible to distinguish four periods during which the content of the movement was different.

The later 1940s

This period marks the return to the prewar pattern on an intensified scale. The motive for the journey was the wish to acquire a profession - law, dentistry or medicine - and the intention, which accorded with the practice of the first of these young men, was to return to East Africa when their studies were completed. Perhaps the intensification of the movement was partly caused by the war itself, which had prevented and delayed the higher education of some. At any rate it seems that once the war was over, and when the universities had absorbed the priority admission of demobilised servicemen, there was a distinct batch of Ismaili students, many of whom sailed on the same boat to England.

This 'class of 48' was small enough to remain in some degree of mutual contact while in England, sufficient in some cases for enduring estimates of one another to have been formed in these years. But whether they joined the Communist Party as one did, so ensuring himself a continuing personal struggle with his own subsequent wealth and prestige, or became bon viveurs (presumably frustrated) they returned to East Africa with a valuable asset which would provide, and has provided, them with a comfortable income and secure profession. No more than their prewar predecessors

did they form the nucleus of permanent settlement here.

The 1950s

While the flow of students continued, there began to be a small amount of family settlement. Very early in the decade, though no one seems to be quite sure exactly when, the first formal jamatkhana in England was set up. This was in a private house in Lyndhurst Gardens, a fact from which the overall size of the community in Britain at that time can be judged. The catchment of the jamatkhana must have consisted largely of the student population, but the organisation centred on a settled family house. One of those who had sailed on the boat as a student in 1948 became acting kamadia of the Lyndhurst Gardens jamat.

In August 1954 a new jamatkhana, this time in premises acquired formally by the community through the Aga Khan, was set up at 51 Kensington Court. It was at this time too that the council was instituted. The year marks, in fact, the official constitution of a permanent Ismaili presence in Britain, though it should not be inferred from this that the community itself was composed only of permanent residents. But the ad hoc organisation was superseded. In 1957 a larger jamatkhana was acquired at 5 Palace Gate, Kensington, which was equipped with hostel facilities. Palace Gate is still the Ismaili mosque, though as we shall see its appointed span may now be drawing to a close.

These changes in the formal organisation of the community may be related to the increasing volume of the migration through the mid-1950s. However, the flow was broader as well as swifter. If students were on the whole still coming to Britain to acquire scarce professional skills, the definition of profession was being stretched. No doubt this change answered less to any vogue than to an appreciation of the markets for various skills in East Africa. Accountancy began to gain ground, as did insurance, certain technical engineering subjects and so on. Economics became a popular degree subject, but in so far as it provided a foundation for the better accountancy qualifications. There were still students of the learned (and profitable) professions, of course, but they were no

longer typical. Most striking of all the changes in the student sector of the migration is the beginning of the presence of girl students, though this began to gain ground only at the very end of the decade. Even then they seem to have avoided what might be called the heavyweight professions - they became teachers, nurses, dispensers or hairdressers.

Meanwhile, there was the beginning of a non-student community of families, though these too seem to have been fairly transient. A few mothers and their children would establish themselves in London for a season. If they were widows they would be subject to the need to return eventually to East Africa no less than if their husbands were still there. There was a coming and going, motivated partly by the tourist urge, and fuelled by East African prosperity. These too were the years when Ismailis, among others, began to be aware of the possibility of independence for the East African territories. The advisability of transferring some part of their capital to Britain began to weigh with them, therefore. Delicate matters of investment cannot be settled in a day or two and stays were extended.

Large scale financing of higher education abroad was not instituted by the East African community until the 1960s. Until then, the budget was concerned largely with the schools which had been built up there, and which were to be taken over by the post-independence governments within a few years. In consequence the students of the 1950s were self-financed. Naturally, they came from the wealthier strata inside the East African Ismaili community. It is true that there were the beginnings of other types of self-finance based on subjects where the student was expected to combine studying with work, but on the whole it was the children of the East African community wealthy who had the first bite at the apple of higher education.

By about 1960 Palace Gate was an outpost of the Ismaili elite, and its children. The president of the council was the son of the most influential of East African Ismailis, and his tenure of this office at that time is symbolic of the relationship between London and East

Africa. These were the Macmillan years of Ismailism in England, as distant from the deprivations and austerities undergone by the first batch of students as was the premiership of Mr. Attlee for the host society. Back in East Africa, an 'England return' enjoyed a prestige derived not so much from association with the Imperial capital as with the kind of jamat that London was. As we have already noticed,[1] even the idea of social distinctions was no more inapplicable to different mosques than it was to London's churches in the nineteenth century.

1960-67

The bulwarks of Vanity Fair were slight. The exclusive composition of the London jamat had rested on the opportunity structure of the East African community. But this had been determined by access to information as much as by control of the necessary financial facilities, and such information must have begun to feed back to East Africa. It soon began to be realised that there was a place for self-support alongside self-finance. In the early sixties therefore, there began to be a flow of the type of student whose education and training demanded that he work at the same time. In short, Ismailis began to seek out the more vocational courses. For the men this meant insurance and accountancy; for the girls the trend was towards nursing, dressmaking and hairdressing. The typical Ismaili student in London was no longer an academically oriented son of a well-to-do family. A quantitative change made for a qualitative change and the prestige of the London jamat went into eclipse. Those who had known it in its heyday felt the need to apologise to one another if they met at Palace Gate on a Friday. Partly this was no doubt the result of their generation's supersession, but equally it reflected a decline in the tone of the jamat as defined in East African terms.[2]

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1. Chapter 2, p. 31.

2. In the P.E.P. report, 'New Commonwealth Students in Britain, with special reference to Students from East Africa' (1965) analysis of Asian students from East Africa in Britain is given for the academic year 1962-63 (pp.40-2) by courses, institutions and areas. Because of loose definition of categories however, these figures are somewhat enigmatic (especially table 22). They do not distinguish by community, nor by government as opposed to private sponsorship, and there must be reservations about the methodology by which they were derived. For what they are worth they show a strong bias (contd.)

Meanwhile in East Africa these were the years of independence. As we have seen, it was the explicit policy of the imamate that Ismailis should take local citizenship, and very high estimates are given of the numbers who did so. However some did not, and in the CR family (see chapter 8) we shall meet some of them. It was precisely these migrants, together with the working students, who broke the mould of the London jamat. The offspring of the East African urban, middle-class Ismailis tended to subsume them under the rubric 'junglees', noted their lack of westernisation in dress and comportment as well as their defective English. Who were these migrants? Clearly they were not convinced of their future prospects in East Africa, community or not. We have seen how the community operated so as to offer certain social benefits to all Ismailis, more or less on a basis of need; in this must be included schools, hospitals, and many types of hardship relief. Despite this it was clearly not possible to start all Ismailis off on the road to capital accumulation in business rather than wage-earning. There were complaints from the villages that the loan policies of the companies discriminated in favour of the towns, and had there been any way in which the voice of the urban working-class Ismailis could have made itself publicly and articulately heard all might not have appeared harmony. The suggestion is that in the end they voted the airline ticket, having no other ticket to vote.

The context of their decisions takes in both the threat to their jobs (where reservations to nationals was soon followed by a policy of Africanisation, as a corrective to the degree of economic privilege enjoyed by Asians in East Africa) as well as the closing off of their chance of advancement as businessmen (for, as we have seen, it was in the early sixties that the industrial development policy incarnated in

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2. (contd.) towards medicine and engineering among university students and towards engineering and (to a lesser extent) pharmacy among non-GCE students at technical colleges. In 1962-63 the majority of East African students in Britain were Asian.

IPS began to absorb investible funds within the community). Without education and without capital there was no very attractive future for men such as Mr. CR, nor indeed for his son, Akbar, under the IPS regime. Moreover, they had to bear in mind the inability of the community to guarantee the educational future of their children or grandchildren. The first step was to opt for a British passport and the second to use it. It is not clear whether many Ismailis were left holding British passports in East Africa after 1968, except in so far as some families had insured themselves by making some of their elder, non-employed womenfolk British. So far there appear to have been no Ismailis among the much-publicised 'shuttlecocked Asians'.

It was during this period that two other tendencies appeared. The first was a diversification within the academic sector of the student population into the non-professional type of degree course, some of which however, gave the option of a career in teaching. Students of both sexes began to read physics, statistics or history, psychology or civil engineering. Economics was still regarded as a basis for a business career, and remained popular, but an economist's place is not in his father's shop. Students such as these were not preparing themselves for the independent professions in East Africa, as the lawyers, doctors and dentists had done and, in a smaller proportion, continued to do. This tendency must be related again to the appearance of IPS. As we have seen, IPS was concerned with the development of Ismaili-dominated industrial enterprises dominated, that is, at the level of personnel but combining Ismaili capital with governmental and overseas capital at the level of finance. The kind of employment provided by IPS itself and by the enterprises it nurtured were therefore occupationally more diverse than a community of independent businessmen had formerly been able to offer. This too must partially explain the movement towards courses in specific technologies - textiles and mechanical engineering, for example.

The second trend was towards the education of the children of wealthy Ismailis in English boarding schools. This was not a novel phenomenon,

but one which was much expanded in these years. In some cases this led to the semi-permanent residence of mothers in this country, either as widows or as representatives of their families. Sometimes elder sisters or brothers, themselves working or students, filled this role. Their brief was concerned as much perhaps with whatever financial interests it had proved possible to transfer to this country as with the holiday entertainment of their children. At one Methodist boarding school in the West Country, for example, there were enough Ismaili boys to organise their own jamatkhana.

1968-70

Except for the Immigration Act 1968 all the factors which applied in the preceding period continue to apply. In addition, however, there has been added a greatly expanded tourism of East Africans to Europe (and now on to America).

The effect of the exclusion of East African Asians holding British passports on the Ismaili migration to Britain is difficult to assess. The movement in some respects seems to have intensified. More families of the 'village' and urban working-class categories have arrived and settled. Some of these have succeeded in acquiring the necessary vouchers. A small number of families from India and Pakistan have come on similar terms. This section of the community is the least equipped to rise in occupational status through bureaucratic institutions. Unless they can generate enough capital to engage in a small business, as some few have done, or to buy a house large enough to let out for profit they can hope at most for some junior white-collar occupation. The 1968 Act appears to have only a limited effect in cases where a family has been able to show a certain level of investment in Britain. For local citizens the position is different. Though there have increasingly been obstacles it is still possible for Ismailis to come to Britain as students and subsequently to stay on. The British High Commissions have become wary of this, however. Of one girl who was coming as a tourist on a Kenya passport after having unsucessfully tried to enter a college here they demanded an affidavit that she would

return within two months. She nevertheless did secure a place while on holiday, and her uncle succeeded in cancelling the affidavit, partly on account of his contacts in the High Commission. Parents with children of school age wishing to send them to Britain have been caught between tightening currency restrictions and diminishing educational opportunity in East Africa.

The presence of so many families and fragments of families in Britain, together with the institution of the charter-flight, where some Ismailis have been involved as travel agents in East Africa, has led to the greatly expanded tourist traffic between East Africa and Britain, with probably the majority of the tourists being East African residents. The following is a list of the visitors received from East Africa by one Ismaili during the course of 1969 and 1970.

1) February-March 1969. Visited by eldest brother who was combining a holiday with extensive shopping and a refresher course in dental surgery, as well as with various financial matters.

2) October-November, 1969. Visited by a second brother and his wife. The brother came for medical attention.

3) October, 1969. Arrival of nephew, aged 14, to go to a boarding school.

4) March-April, 1970. Visit of third sister and husband, parents of the boy mentioned in 3). Beyond visiting their son, they were concerned with assessing the prospects for settling in Britain and with their investments here.

5) June, 1970. Visit of former colleague and partner in a hairdressing enterprise in Mombasa, together with her husband, who is a travel agent. They went on to New York for a few days. She was concerned with ordering equipment for her salon.

6) June-July, 1970. Visit of school friend with her husband. Her first visit to England. The husband was concerned with his masters in the German firm of which he is East African sales representative. They therefore travelled on the continent.

7) July-August, 1970. Visit of third and youngest brother and his wife travelling in company with her brother and his wife. No explicit business purpose. They too travelled on to New York.

8) August-September, 1970. Full circle: visited by the brother mentioned in 1) together with his son, his niece and his mother-in-law (who is also his mother's sister). This time his object was to holiday and to look for a school for his son. The niece came to take a secretarial course but later changed her mind and joined a college of art, and the mother-in-law, who is widowed, for a holiday.

9) August, 1970. Visited by nephew (son of eldest sister) newly

graduated from Makerere and on a student exchange to Europe. He inquired about the possibility of doing postgraduate work at LSE, but nas now gone to a Canadian university for this purpose.

10) Eldest brother proposes to ~~visit~~ return again in December for reasons which are not yet apparent (possibly connected with his investments in Britain), accompanied by brother-in-law (mentioned in 4)). Both men are very seriously considering settling in Britain, and the latter has already secured a work permit. Both hold professional qualifications originally gained in Britain; both have East African citizenship.

Both parents have been in this country during the last five years, while the youngest sister is married and living in London. All except the eldest of the (five) sisters has visited Britain at some time. This is perhaps an exceptional record. Both the eldest brother and the brother-in-law (a lawyer) mentioned in 4) were students in Britain immediately after the war and, as this indicates, the family concerned is not poor. But as can be seen there is a continuous presence of a tourist element in London which makes for a flow of information as well as for a comparison of styles of life and standards of life.

Since its inception after the war, then, the Ismaili community in Britain has undergone a series of changes which amount basically to growth and diversification. As far as growth is concerned, globally numbers have increased from probably not more than one hundred in 1950 to some 5,000 - 6,000 (but see below, p. 167) today. The greatest acceleration in this expansion has occurred in the last eight years or so, and with increasing intensity, despite the operation of the Immigration Act 1968. Precise figures are not available, of course, and are never likely to be, short of a compulsory census of unparalleled detail.

The diversification undergone by the London jamat is remarkable. From an outpost of the urbanised, westernised Ismaili elite and their children it has become a heterogeneous religious group with little more than language, ritual and ramifying kinship to hold in common. The change reflects the differential propensity to study and migrate, and the unequal distribution of the means to do so, in the East African community. That the shift has occurred so radically and dramatically, transforming the

jamat in a mere ten years, demonstrates the complexity of the East African community. Much more than numbers is obviously involved. There has been a movement from the dominance of the wealthy to the preponderance of the employed; from the young to the middle-aged; from the urbanites to the villagers; from the sophisticates to the 'junglees'; and from the independent professionals to the accountants. From the beginning there were obviously other types of diversity too, for example the national; but this seems to have been of little importance for the community which in reality is an East African one not much affected by arbitrary national boundaries, though different government policies may have affected the propensity to migrate.

The result of this complex migration pattern is, then, that the London Ismaili community has a social composition unlike that of any East African jamat, though its fractions may be defined in East African terms. Some sections of it are self-sustaining, consisting of residents in this country whose livelihoods and immediate families are here. Other sections are parasitic on East Africa - the self-financed (as opposed to self-supporting) students and community-financed students, as well as the temporary residents such as mothers and their children who are being schooled here. Besides this, two other points stand out. In East African terms there is something of a meeting of extremes in London in terms of the polarity which is reported between the life of the countryside and that of the towns, extremes which may be related only partly to wealth. Second, there is an absence of middle class Ismailis engaged in businesses on their own account and who have, in East Africa, formed the solid 'yeoman' backbone of Ismailism. Their place is taken, in more senses than one, by the preponderant presence of the students, the near students and the newly qualified. In terms of the analysis of the economic life of the East African Ismailis, one can say that at one stroke the milch cow of the system has been eliminated in favour of the calves. But these students are in some ways a disguised white-collar class. To all intents and purposes they are junior administrative and clerical workers, dependent

for their livelihood on their weekly wage or monthly salary. They are the antithesis of the Ismaili ideal which was described as 'possessive individualism'.

Diversity itself is not unusual in an Ismaili jamat. Indeed, as I have argued, it is the foundation of the success of Ismailism. It is, however, important to be clear that this type of social diversity is unique, and that the relationships which pertain between the various identifiable fragments of an East African Ismaili community cannot apply in London, simply because the basis on which the groups are founded is different.

East Africa's loss is Britain's gain. What has the East African Ismaili community lost? First there is the apparently permanent loss of whole families, perhaps disproportionately from the smaller settlements. The economic position of these families was based on very small business or on lower-level white-collar work. In the same kind of economic category there have been urban families who have come to Britain, but the balance has been towards the (relatively) rural Ismailis. Second, there have been fragments of well-to-do urban families - widows and children, at least for part of the year, and with a permanent establishment in Britain. Third, the educable youth and the ambitious though unendowed have come to lay the educational foundations of their fortunes, wherever they are ultimately to be pursued. One can see from this that the danger for East African Ismailism is not a general loss of numbers, but the strategic loss of its most gifted youth. If they decide to stay in Britain when their studies are complete, the technical resources by which alone their community as a whole will remain pre-eminent in a changing East African economy will not be there to allocate. It is in this context that the policy of the imamate for the British Ismaili community appears to have been formulated. There is evidence that thorough resource planning for the community - viewed internationally - does take place, as we shall subsequently see.

Chapter 7

PATHWAYS IN BRITAIN

The burden of the last chapter was the diversification which the Ismaili presence in Britain has undergone over the past twenty years or so. Thus it was pointed out that the 'outpost of the elite' even of 1960 is now a thing of the past, and that both the urban white-collar groups and the rural, or semi-rural, Ismailis have added their weight to the flow of migrants to Britain. These 'new' Ismailis have altered the balance of the London jamat in a way which has fatally undermined its prestige in East African terms.

The consequences of this heterogeneity go far beyond the standing of 'London', however. The problem is twofold. The first prong is to understand how the diverse socio-economic origins of the migrants in East Africa have affected their dispersal through the British social structure, and this will be discussed in the present chapter; the second is to see how this dispersal has affected the internal life of the community, and this will occupy chapters 8 and 9.

Before 1960 Ismailis in Britain were largely absent from the sources of their incomes and prestige. For both they depended on their families in East Africa, and it would have been in this light that they related to one another. On the whole they were students. Their being students in British universities or other institutions of learning of course made them susceptible to British social classifications as well, but on the whole the places they had in British society were peripheral to their lives. Their social trajectories from freshmen to finalists, which they shared with their British colleagues, were incorporated into their identities as East African Ismailis, though in one sense these trajectories could also be said to have been movements through the British social structure. In most cases they were oriented towards a future in East Africa which would typically be guaranteed by the statuses of their families. The content of the relationship between, let us say, a student established at an institution

and his aunt, in Britain to supervise the schooling of his cousins, would owe little to British evaluations of relative social status. Of course the fact of having studied in Britain and having secured a degree or other qualification here represented a future claim on a place in British society. Some men are cashing these claims after twenty years in East Africa, having found their positions there increasingly untenable.

One aspect of education in Britain may have had a little effect on mutual Ismaili relationships. The category 'student' is not socially (as opposed to educationally)homogeneous: in some ways there is a hierarchy of prestige attached to various institutions and to various courses of study. In so far as this hierarchy is a feature of British social structure, and to the extent that Ismaili students adopted it as standard of reference, then one can say that (to them) alien values entered into the standing of members of the community among themselves, without prejudice to the fact that Ismailis as a business community had their own pragmatic evaluations of various courses. It may be, for example, that some students, reading perhaps at an ancient institution for a degree entitling them to practise a learned profession, did see themselves as elevated above a mere technologist studying an equally challenging course at a regional college of technology. If they did they would have found it problematic to make much of it once their courses were over, having to present it to an East African audience not much versed in such subtleties (and which, moreover, had always been inclined to reduce all types of post-school education to the vague status of 'college').

As more Ismailis became economically and socially rooted in Britain during the 1960s, this changed. The two most striking developments of these years were the diversification of the community on the one hand, and the increasing permanence of settlement on the other. In these circumstances the irrelevance of British specifications of relationships between various sectors of the Ismaili community is likely to have diminished. First, it is necessary to see how the Ismailis have distributed themselves.

In some situations geography is a clue to social structure. If social groups are localised then the residence pattern tells a great deal about the formation of sub-groups within a community. If, further, the Ismailis were concentrated in some particular, relatively homogeneous area, which they are not, then it might be possible to argue that in British terms they were socially homogeneous.

Nationally the pattern of settlement distinguishes the rural from the urban. Bar one woman married to an English businessman, and living in most bucolic Northamptonshire (about two hours' drive from Palace Gate), Ismailis in Britain live in the towns, and the larger ones at that. It is said that some 80 per cent. of Ismailis i.e. some 4,000 people, are in London. If one rules out students at provincial universities and other educational institutions this proportion would probably be greater. Despite this there are about twelve provincial jamatkhanas 'known to the council'. Some of these are satellites of London, as with the Chatham and Chelmsford[1] mosques. Most of the others are either in schools (as for example at Queen's College in Somerset) or are based on the students at a provincial university. However, there are a few families settled in some of these provincial centres; sometimes the jamatkhana will be based on the home of a married student, as for example in Leicester.

On the whole, then, Ismailis live within sight of the Post Office Tower. But within London they are very widely dispersed. To put it graphically, an Ismaili estate agent, asked if Ismailis lived in any particular areas, flicked through his 'A to Z' and said that he thought there was not a page where he knew of no one. Possibly this was an exaggeration, but certainly there is a scattered population right through

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1. Though there are several Ismaili households settled in Chelmsford, the jamatkhana is based exclusively on the students at the local technical college, and is closed during vacations. Most of the settled families, commute, and some attend Palace Gate. Some others, including an Ismaili lecturer at the same technical college, attend no jamatkhana.

the western half of Greater London, defined by the diameter through Palmers Green, Charing Cross and Wimbledon. Further South there are families in Croydon and Morden; and in the commuter belt there are sufficient Ismailis in Chatham to support a small jamatkhana of their own. Towards the centre of London there are Ismaili families settled in Knightsbridge and Kensington. The general rule would be that if a postal district has an N, an S or a W in it, and sometimes if it does not, there will be Ismailis there.

Beyond this, the identification of clusters of settlement raises the question of the representativeness of informants . Leaving this aside for the moment, there are three areas with a relatively high-density Ismaili settlement. These are the Wimbledon area; Kensington; and Kensal Rise with parts of Paddington (frequently referred to as Bayswater). It should be emphasised, however, that the densities involved are not high - in Kensal Rise for example one informant could name some 16 houses within a radius of about a mile where there were Ismailis, and this would constitue one of the highest densities anywhere in London, except perhaps for Kensington.

Very broadly these three zones can be classified in other ways which make of them indicators of tendencies within the community. Alongside these, as a fourth geographical corollary of differentiation, should be set the settlements of the commuter belt, the Chatham area and Chelmsford. In what terms can these zones be distinguished? First, in terms of housing. Referring to Wimbledon as area A, Kensington as B, Kensal Rise-cum-Paddington as C and the commuter belt as D, we can say that there is an acute distinction to be drawn between areas A and D on the one hand and C on the other by sole or multiple occupancy. Typically, the family in the Chatham area (D) will be living in a new house on a privately developed housing estate, of which they are in single occupancy. Much the same will be true of Ismailis living in the Wimbledon area (A), though the houses concerned will be more expensive and not always new. Against this, Ismailis in area C will not occupy a whole house, and their accommo-

dation, rather than being mortgaged or paid off, will be rented. In area B, both these patterns are possible, but here house prices and rents will be much higher.

From these remarks it is apparent that Ismailis have penetrated into the main sectors of the British housing market, at least the private market, from owner-occupation in the suburbs and commuter belt, and in central London, to furnished weekly lettings in the twilight zone. The social geography of residential London thus in the main determines the geography of British Ismailism. In what follows in this chapter, an attempt to relate the social geography of British Ismailism to the East African origins of the Ismailis concerned will be made. For it cannot be assumed that in terms of housing prestige the structure of the British community is a mere translation of the structure of East African Ismailism. In advance it is impossible to predict that a chic mews flat in Belgravia denotes a family high-born in East Africa. In fact, as we shall see, it would almost certainly be the case.

If Ismailis are distributed across London's housing market, it is because they have made use of their resources to express their relative status. Their consumption of housing, that is to say, is related to their income. Housing is, for them, therefore, both a result and an expression of income. It becomes a significant form of conspicuous consumption, and in relation to one another it might be called competitive consumption. But if Ismailis are competing with one another in the housing market a large element in the calculation is bound to be the price of the house. These prices are determined in a market which is largely indigenous. Thus the estimates which Ismailis come to make of the value of houses (from the competitive point of view) are directly related to the scale of values of the society around them. In any case, as we saw in Chapter 5, Ismailis are well prepared to evaluate housing by British standards.

The geography of British Ismailism, and the associated housing patterns, between them suggest a marked diversity within the community. This could, however, reflect merely a patterned life cycle rather than a

system of class relationships. This would be the case were newly migrating families settling in certain areas only to move on to other areas as they settled down. But the contrary is true. Though Ismailis do appear to move on from one 'zone' to another, there are mutually exclusive pathways which are determined by education, occupation, resources in East Africa and other factors.

Let me give some examples of these pathways drawn from particular case histories, one for each of the 'housing zones' I have outlined. Family A consists of a married couple, Farida and Sadru. Farida comes from a middle-class family in Mombasa. Her father is a businessman, though not one who has ever aspired to any community office, which is unusual. She is the youngest of five sisters and three brothers. She did very well in her Cambridge Overseas School Certificate, and in 1964 came to Britain to read for the Bar, at the expense of her father. In 1967, Farida completed her bar examinations but, being too young to be called, spent a year at a provincial university as an occasional student, reading mainly sociology and criminology. It so fell out that this university happened to be very close to the town where Sadru, whom she had known from the Aga Khan School in Mombasa, was studying architecture. He is the eldest of four brothers and one sister, all of whom were in Britain at the time, either at the university or at school. His father, as will be gathered, is a man of substance - derived from a coconut plantation a few miles outside Mombasa. Despite his wealth, he too has never achieved community office, though it appears that recently he has given rather more time to the matter.

In the summer of 1968 Sadru completed the full-time part of his course, and Farida her studies. They were married in Mombasa at the end of the year, and both returned to London early the next year. They settled down in a flat in Putney, part of a house owned by Sadru's father. This flat had always been reserved for the brothers and sisters of Sadru during their vacation, and for a short time the arrangement continued. Meanwhile, Sadru was working in an architect's office, completing the practical part of his course. Farida, who had never 'chambered', was working in a solicitor's

office, something allowed on the assumption that she was not intending to practise at the English bar. By 1969, Christmas, however, they had moved to a new, very attractive house in Wimbledon. The whole of the Putney house was now being let, and the rents going to pay off the Wimbledon mortgage (and there was another house, also owned by Sadru-père, though this was never occupied by the family). During the vacations, they were expected to look after Sadru's brothers and sister, but this apart the house was to all intents and purposes their own. Soon after they had moved in, Farida voluntarily disbarred herself, and began to prepare for the Law Society examinations, intending to practise as a solicitor. Sadru was meanwhile completing the formal stages of his training.

Family B consists also of a married couple of roughly the same age. Amir is the younger brother of three sisters, Rehmet the second of four sisters and a brother. Amir has been in England since 1953, the days of Palace Court, when he came to a public school here. At that time his father was a dentist in East Africa who had trained in this country before the war. As well as a flourishing practice, there was property too. Amir's father was an influential man in the Nairobi community and beyond, in the years immediately leading up to independence. That his activities extended beyond the community is attested by his MBE acquired during the war years for his charitable activities. At a crucial time, Amir returned to East Africa to take his A-levels. He seems then to have met Rehmet, who was also engaged with A-levels. She came from a family which also had once been very prominent within the community and beyond it, her father having been mayor of the relatively small, then-Tanganyikan town where they lived. In 1965 she came to Britain, aided partly by the community, to read for a degree in history at a provincial university.

At about the time of independence, Amir's father, on holiday in Europe, was offered a Kensington practice. He took it, and since then the family has lived 'above the shop' in an elegant house which his card describes as 'behind Harrods'. Amir completed his A-levels in London. After graduating in 1968, Rehmet went home. At the end of the year Amir joined her and they were married in East Africa. They were set up by

Amir's parents in a flat in a house some ten minutes' walk away from the surgery. The house is owned by Amir's mother and the greater part of it let out. While Amir completed his degree, Rehmet became a graduate-trainee with a large and stately Knightsbridge retail organisation, where she still is (jokes about 'back to the duka' not permitted). Amir graduated in economics in 1970 and is now articled to a huge international firm of accountants. The house they live in, technically in Chelsea, would fetch something in the region of £25,000. There seems a fair chance that they will eventually emigrate to the United States or Canada; in 1969 while Rehmet was on a post-nuptial visit to East Africa, Amir went to North America to look at the prospects there.

Family C also spans two generations. Aziz is Farida A's father's sister's son, while Farida A's brother is married to Nurbanu C's father's sister's daughter, a connection which is calculated ad hoc and which carries no social importance. Aziz C's father is a man more of religion than of business. For many years he was a bank clerk, and it is only in recent years that he has branched out into the petrol station business in his native Mombasa. He was active in the Ismailia association of that town, and at one time its chairman. Aziz willingly lends literature on religious subjects. On leaving school, Aziz was apprenticed with East African Power and Light, but in 1961 came to Britain. Here he was again apprenticed and learned the photographic repair business. Soon he and another Ismaili (to be precise, Nurbanu's cousin and Farida A's brother's brother-in-law) who had also learned the trade set themselves up in a house in Putney. Then they moved into television repairs. They had a chequered history of disagreements and disappointments, claiming to have been cheated by their (English) partner, and finally they separated. Aziz has now returned to photographic repairs, his present business. Nurbanu C lived originally in Kampala, where her father was a managerial white-collar worker. After she had finished school, they came to England as a family, and her father was now employed as a storekeeper. She herself became a typist. Until 1970, when they got a GLC mortgage on a house in

Wembley, they lived in rented accommodation in the Kensal Green area. Aziz and Nurbanu were married in 1969 and moved into a flat very similar to that of her parents in a neighbouring street. The house was owned by the Hindu who lived on the ground floor. When Nurbanu's parents moved to Wembley, Aziz and Nurbanu moved into their old flat. Shortly afterwards, however, they too got a GLC mortgage and moved out to Wembley.

Aziz's younger brother, Gulamhusain, came to England in 1965 to read for a degree in electrical engineering at a Scottish University, and after graduating he worked for the Scottish Electricity Board. He obtained a building society mortgage on a house in Edinburgh. By now Aziz's business was expanding. In 1970 Gulamhusain resigned his job, put his house in the hands of agents to be let and came to London to join his brother in the photographic repairs business. He lived with the C's in their flat, moved with them to Nurbanu's parents' house and joined them in Wembley. Also staying with the C's was Aziz's cousin, Gulzar, a nurse working at a private clinic in London. She too went with them on their moves. The flats they rented were first two, and then three room flats, plus kitchen and shared bathroon, both at about the £10 mark.

Family D consists of Nizar and Munira D and their two daughters, both under the age of 5. Nizar is a Jungbari (from Zanzibar) while Munira is very much a Kathiawari, born in Mombasa. Nizar D is not a man of any patrimony. He qualified as a civil engineer after studying in London, and on this his fortune depends. Munira's family is wealthy. She first came to London in the late 1950s and became a dispenser with Boots. She and Nizar were married in 1963 when he was still studying. They lived in a flat in Kennington then, where their landlord was a priest. In 1965, however, they got a mortgage on a house on a privately developed estate in Rainham, Kent. By this time Nizar was engaged on the practical part of his course in an office of a firm of civil engineers in Westminster. For four years he commuted from one of Southern Region's most inadequate stations on one of its most congested lines. Munira stopped work when the elder of their daughters was born, and since then has been a housewife.

Now they have been joined on a neighbouring estate by her sister, married to a Ceylonese civil engineer, and with one daughter. Their houses would now be in the £6,000 - £6,500 bracket. Both Nizar and his wife's brother-in-law work locally now, the former for a private company 'on site', the latter (who is not an Ismaili and still something of a Buddhist) for the Medway Water Board.

These histories, though not those of 'typical' Ismailis in any statistical sense, do show some of the factors at work in the dispersal of Ismailis through the British housing market, their situation in terms of the geography of British towns, and hence, to some degree, the pattern of their mutual association. Clearly the first distinction of any importance is that between those who are able to dispose of their parents' wealth, if any, and those who are not. The As and the Bs both have money on the husband's side, the Ds on the wife's side and the Cs on neither side. Munira D has brothers enough not to have received a great part of her late father's wealth. [1] Like the Cs, therefore, the Ds are largely dependent on their own earnings. Their housing reflects entirely their own efforts, the mortgage they have been able to raise on the basis of their own income. This in turn depends on occupation and on the balance struck between investment and consumption. It is quite possible, for example, that Aziz C has been in receipt of a larger income than Nizar D over the last five years, though until this year he has not become an owner-occupier perhaps partly because of the need to capitalise his business. Now that Aziz is married, the pressure has changed, and in any case Nurbanu is at work. Aziz C is obviously satisfied that his business is sufficiently capitalised to make it possible for him to divert funds to housing. There is no question, incidentally, of his attempting to supplement his income by having his brother and his cousin to stay with him. In the latter case it is a convenience - Gulamhusain is younger and unmarried as well as being

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1. Though see below.

a business partner, while Gulzar is definitely staying with kin, an integral part of the household.

The As and the Bs are obviously drawing on parental resources, both through the husband. Amir B's father is not, however, deriving his current wealth from current activity. He claims to be living on his capital (which must be considerable) and to regard his future as uncertain. His dental practice is a going concern, but in Kensington his overheads must be enormous. In short, the funds at the disposal of the As and the Bs, apart from their current incomes (and both wives are working), are thus derived from East Africa. Their positions in the housing market, and the prestige they cull from it, are consequently not determined by their qualifications or occupations, though their long-term prospects are.

It should be pointed out that the direct determinant of housing in London, aside from earned income, is wealth in East Africa, which may or may not be related to community office or prestige. The father of Sadru A for example, is a wealthy man but not a prestigious one. The property empire he is setting up in London and the handsome way he has dealt with his children's education and welfare will do him no harm, but will not directly bring him to the fore in Mombasa. Too much there is against him, perhaps mainly the fact that a coconut plantation is not likely to bring him into much direct contact with the business community nor to make him a part of it. For many years the As lived at the plantation out of Mombasa. Now they are beginning to be known, partly through the marriage to the relatively well-known, Farida, and partly through the charitable community-oriented activities of Farida A's mother-in-law. Sadru A's father is also giving (ostentatiously) to the community (in the form of memani) to bring on the good work of building family prestige. At the same time it should be pointed out that the accumulation of family capital in London is a safeguard against the day when East Africa dispenses with its Asians. Amir B's father, on the other hand, had more prestige than most. He was the leading dentist of Nairobi and has refurbished many a famous smile.

He had the ear of the former Aga Khan, perhaps because he had no partisan cause to urge and because he was not part of the business section of the community, though a scion of it. As far as housing is concerned, however, the difference between the As and the Bs is merely a matter of taste. The Bs live in a flat which an estate agent would probably want to describe as 'elegant and of character', meaning that its Regency charm much more than compensated for its little inconveniences. The A's Wimbledon house, on the other hand, would be 'elegant and modern'. Both distinctly 'des. res.' But the Bs have not of course quite launched themselves onto the property market, and may not until Amir has qualified as an accountant.

Of the couples mentioned above, three husbands and three wives had received some form of higher education in this country, as had Gulamhusain C. Except for Rehmet B, all of them were financed by their parents, and she partly. Aziz C had worked hiw own way through his apprenticeship. This should be seen in the context of the policy of the bursary committees in East Africa, who seem to apply a means test about as stringent as can be imagined. (They also have a knack of reducing bursaries in mid-course, thus forcing parents to scrape the barrel through to the hoop or else bring their children home.) Rehmet B had to submit to this, but her father - despite his 'name' - was in undeniably reduced circumstances at the time, and there were neither elder brothers nor paternal uncles. Gulamhusain C seems to have been financed partly by his elder sister, a trained teacher, as well as by his father. As one can see, therefore, community bursaries are (or were: see chapter 9) something of a last resort. They provide a guarantee that a qualified person will not lack funds to pursue an approved course. The committees appear to be willing to allow a fairly wide range of courses, though philosophy or linguistics might strain their generosity; and political science fractures it altogether.

Thus it follows that higher education is not entirely dependent on funds which can be generated within the family. This reduces the advantage of the East African wealthy as far as the occupation of their children is concerned, an advantage which, as has already been noted, was already

diminished by the enlightened schools policy of the East African community. But there are familiar ways in which, despite this, educational opportunity is unevenly distributed. Some of these would include the kind of educational background of the parents, their purely economic ability to forgo the support of their children by putting them through higher educational institutions, the presence of kin in Britain to reduce the cost of vacations, use of English at home and privacy available for study.

These few case histories suggest some tentative conclusions. First, that the occupational distribution of families recently formed is to some degree independent of family wealth in East Africa. Second, that despite checks on the flow of capital from East Africa to Britain the standard and location of the housing of these families does reflect the wealth, though not necessarily the prestige, of the previous generation in East Africa, at least on the husband's side. Third, that the occupation and location of families who have migrated without the intention of gaining some sort of qualification is directly related to their circumstances prior to migration. The positions of the respective parents of Amir B and Nurbanu C in the job and housing markets are mutually as far removed in Britain as they were in East Africa.

Households formed in this country may therefore be described either as determined so far as their relative status is concerned by the occupation of the husband, or as determined in the same respect by the occupation of the husband plus the wealth of the husband's parents in East Africa.[1] (To some extent occupation itself will also reflect parental resources.) The point would be here that occupation alone is insufficient to define status. In the housing markets too, Ismailis may be insulated from the direct

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1. As will be clear, it does a man posthumous credit to provide directly for his daughters, though the nyani relationship (a girl is her elder brothers' nyani) in theory safeguards daughters' futures. This relationship is a protective one and remains effective even in the most advanced cases of Westernisation. A bridegroom has to turn out his pockets, by convention reluctantly, for his younger sisters immediately after his wedding, presumably to show that his new wife shall not prevent him carrying out his fraternal duties.

consequences of their occupations. Where they are not thus insulated they find themselves in situations similar to those of their English neighbours. Following Rex and Moore (1967) let us consider the three semi-autonomous accommodation markets: private housing for owner-occupation; council housing; and rented accommodation, whether furnished or otherwise.

No, Ismaili, so far as I know, has become a tenant of any council in a purpose-built council house. Some may be weekly tenants of the GLC or the London boroughs, but these would be in older dwellings acquired by the authority concerned. In some ways they would be little different from private tenancies. For East African Ismailis, as we have seen, the norm of security of tenure is owner-occupation. There is for them also a third alternative, but this would be investment in property for letting. Ismailis are therefore interested in lettings (as tenants), owner-occupation, and property investment (though this may be coupled with owner-occupation of part of the premises). As we have seen the transition from the first to the second sector, which requires capital, is often aided by East African wealth. It occurs either before marriage (as in the case of Gulamhusain C) or soon afterwards (as with Aziz C). It may be described as a primary objective. The third alternative is optional. Where it is taken, it may be part of a decision to make property investment the primary source of income, to denote, that is, an intention to make a career in property development or as a landlord.

It is interesting that these observations tie in closely with the results of Davies and Taylor's inquiries in Newcastle (1970). As far as Ismailis are concerned (and only that far), they have no wish to compete for council housing. It is for them a very poor alternative to owner-occupation, though they may not value highly the further transition to being a landlord in part-occupation of the premises, or even absentee landlordism. For them the competitive consumption of housing is paramount, though ownership is a necessary precondition, so ruling out council property. Property ownership may be approved, but in itself it does not

confer much distinction in the community. When the time comes to consume the resulting rents in the form of personal consumption of housing, then it will be a source of prestige, but only in proportion to the income it produces. Thus, for example, Gulamhusain C, mentioned above, has a mortgage on a house in Edinburgh, which is now wholly let. Yet his status is really determined by that of his parents and the household in which he lives in London, that is, with Aziz and Nurbanu C in rather cramped conditions.

Thus transfusions of family capital from East Africa have on the whole served to make available to the prestigious strata of the community there the symbols of eminence in Britain, especially in so far as housing classes are concerned. Yet, as we shall see, consumption, whether of housing, or leisure, or consumer durables is not the only criterion of excellence available. The reputation of family is not forgotten here, and education counts for much. The Ismailis whose estimation of housing articulates their scale of values with that of the host society are thus separated from it in that they operate in terms of a supplementary and alien value scale as well.

Chapter 8

A SOCIAL SALAD[1]

So far I have attempted to sketch the composition of the Ismaili community in England in terms of its East African origins on the one hand and in terms of its dispersal through the British class structure on the other, using housing as a primary indicator. In this chapter I want to look at the objective patterns of life of the various sectors of the community defined in British class terms. In doing so I have selected families which seem to me to demonstrate by their differences significant varieties of British Ismailism. In general I am proposing the hypothesis that class situation in Britain is overdetermining relationships originating in East Africa, certainly so far as peership is concerned, and also to the extent of kinship. This is not to say that kinship ties can somehow be abolished in name. Legislation by manners can never do this. But it can reinforce or nullify any content these relationships might have had. Exchanges - of hospitality, information, services or women - may no longer take place. This view must be treated with caution, however. It will be contended that it holds in so far as the relevance of the community diminishes, but it remains true that certain families - in what follows notably the As and Cs - are still pursuing strategies which take their meaning from the community—based hierarchy rather than from class situation.

I shall deal, then, with the milieux which I think may be described among the Ismailis in England, attempting to draw out the logic of their discreteness. Even before commencing this, however, I would stress that what I have recorded here may be no more than a period of diplomacy prior

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1. 'When we consider the vague boundary lines of the white-collar world, we can easily understand why such an occupational salad invites so many conflicting theories and why general images of it are likely to differ', C. Wright Mills (1951), p. 291.

to the formation of stable alliances. Most of the people described hereunder are young, some of them recently married. The residence of most of them is neolocal. The society in which they live is changing. The composition of the Ismaili community itself is uncertain and liable to change. There is no stable normative pattern of association and dissociation operating overtly in terms of social class which compels conformity or revolt. They are in the process of making Ismailism in Britain, just as their grandparents made East African Ismailism. Like their grandparents, they are equipped with received ideas, but these are not of precise relevance to their novel situation. What they make of Ismailism in Britain depends largely on how they are made by Britain, and how they apply their received ideas and the ideas they garner from their indigenous neighbours to relationships among themselves. Anything that can be said about how they have worked out these matters up to now is necessarily highly provisional.

The CRs

The CRs are already partially known to us. The elder daughter of the family is Nurbanu, wife of Aziz C. They live now in Wembley. The family consists of a father, mother, a married son and wife, and four younger sons. The two daughters are both married, one to Aziz C, and the other to an Ismaili who lives in Teddington (where he carries on an 'import/export' business).[1] The CRs household (which thus excludes the two daughters but includes the daughter-in-law) occupies a three-bedroomed house which, as we have seen, was acquired recently with the aid of a GLC mortgage. A fourth bedroom has been made of one of the two downstairs reception rooms, leaving the other one and the small kitchen as the only

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1. The expression in Gujarati which loosely translates as 'import/export' carries a distinct connotation of 'shadiness', as though one would scarcely expect everything in such a business to be above board. Alan Brien, in the New Statesman, recently defined the description 'company director' as used by journalists to mean 'crook, or at least someone with a record of dangerous driving' (vol. 80, p. 208); the level of suspicion is similar, no doubt with a similar degree of justification.

available communal space. Each married couple occupies a double bedroom, the two younger boys have bunk-beds in the upstairs small bedroom, and the two elder unmarried sons have the downstairs bedroom. The human density of the house is thus high, but well organised and in no sense oppressive. What is oppressive is the sound of the trains which pass along the bottom of the back garden on their way into and out of Paddington station. The father and mother have taken the bedroom where this is most apparent.

Although the CR household already contains within it the nucleus of a second household, it remains a united and solidary unit. If there is strain, it is well hidden. Clearly not all the brothers will be able to maintain permanent patrilocal residence, nor even temporarily if the eldest brother wishes to stand his ground. But such questions have yet to arise in practice. The CRs go so far as to make an explicit virtue of their 'clanniness'. They are aware of their achievement. It is produced by, and produces, a strong sense of mutual interdependency, a feeling that they stand or fall together.

Mr. CR came to Britain when he was already middle-aged (about 45), old enough to be economically separated from his close kin. His parents (who were born in India) left him no share in any enterprise, and he had no schooling beyond what might be called the elementary. Even now his English is by no means perfect, though it is adequate for his purposes. He was born in a village near Nairobi. After school he held a series of jobs as salesman and salesmanager. He was, that is to say, employed, and thus of little account in the direction of his community's affairs. In 1951 he went to Kampala, where most of his children were born, and returned to Nairobi in 1962. He was then manager of 'Radio Dealers Combine', though I have been unable to ascertain very much about either the post or the organisation.

The following year his eldest son, Akbar, then aged about sixteen, wishing, as he says, to see London (though without doubt impelled by an ambition which he could not satisfy in East Africa), broke away from home

and hitch-hiked to Britain. He says he started with no more than £10 in his pocket. Within three months, however, he had reached his objective. Passing through Egypt he visited Aswan, where the tombs of the Aga Khans lie. He says that the experience of praying at that hallowed place is the origin of his intense devotion to his family (though no doubt this first long absence from home and a strange country aided the work of the sacred relics in making him reconsider his youthful revolt).

In London, Akbar held a series of jobs requiring various degrees of skill. In turn he worked in a Wimpy Bar, as a labourer, and then as an assistant in a chemist' shop. Here he interested himself in window displays to the extent of attending evening classes in the subject. For three years he worked for one of the firms supplying the chemist's on their advertising displays (having approached one of their salesmen on the off-chance). Since then he has worked for two breweries, Watneys and Allied, registering share transfers. He was displaced from Watneys when the job was computerised. Akbar, that is to say, is doing a mechanical white-collar job not demanding a high level of skill.

Because his parents were not born in East Africa, Mr. CR was not entitled to automatic Kenya citizenship, though his children were. In fact he opted for British citizenship and a British passport. He is thus one of the 'Kenya Asians' of the newspaper headlines. In not renouncing his entitlement to British citizenship, Mr. CR implicitly ignored the advice of the imamate, a fact of which he is well aware. Furthermore, when, in 1965, Mr. CR received a latter from his son in London suggesting he and the rest of the family also come to Britain, he decided to accede. With his eldest daughter, Nurbanu, he joined his son. They took rooms from a Pakistani landlord (though they are now appalled at the high price they paid), and Mr. CR went to the employment exchange to look for work. He still has the job - as a store-keeper with Unigate Dairies (Transport Division) - he got then, and remembers the helpfulness and consideration he experienced in getting it. Though the job is inferior to the one he had in Nairobi it is secure and he is content with it. Nurbanu has had various

office jobs, lately as a typist/telephonist with the Bank of India (where Aziz C 'knew someone').

Like Nurbanu, the CR's younger daughter was a Kenya citizen. Though Mr. CR had originally intended that his family come one by one to join him, it began to be clear that there were difficulties in store for them. After lengthy one-sided (because unanswered) correspondence with the Home Office over the admission of his daughter, and a visit to his MP, Mr. CR decided that all the rest of his family must come together. In this he succeeded, at the cost of great inconvenience as far as housing was concerned, compounded by the sudden expense required for the fares. The CRs survived this crisis, however, and moved into the flat in Kensal Rise which, as we have seen, Aziz and Nurbanu C took over after the CRs left for Wembley.

From this recital it should be apparent that the CR family is at something like one extreme of the Ismaili social scale in England. They have the advantages neither of wealth nor of education. In the middle years of his life, with five sons and two daughters, Mr. CR uprooted himself from East Africa against the drift of feeling in at least the upper reaches of his community and committed himself to a new life in Britain where his most influential kinsman was his son Akbar. Mr. CR's strategy has been on the whole successful. On the debit side he has lost something in direct income from employment, as well as the country in which he was born, though to which he was perhaps not greatly attached. On the other hand he has achieved stability and security; the problems remaining are to some extent foreseeable and such that he can have some influence in their resolution. They look as though they are going to be concerned mostly with the house and the household, and the education and employment of his remaining children.

The CR's house in Wembley is jointly owned by Akbar and his father. Since they moved in they and the other brothers (as well as Aziz C) have devoted a great deal of time and effort to carrying out necessary decorations and improvements (such as concreting the paths and rear curtilage

of the house). But the house is stretched already to its limits - there is absolutely no question of letting off any part of it, even if the CRs wished to. It seems they will be content with paying off the mortgage, which - on current projections - is going to take the better part of the next two decades. Mr. CR's retention of his original job appears to spring from a recognition that his fate is fixed and a resignation to it. He is not against ambition in others, but seems to have none for himself beyond his present situation. On the other hand, Akbar does aspire to something more. He saved up some £250, and found two other friends of his to put up £500 each for a scheme to export transistor radios to the Congo. His father advised him, so he says, that the operation was by no means watertight, but nonetheless Akbar persuaded him to put up £250. Akbar says he wanted to see if he could make something out of business. Alas, when the radios reached their destination it turned out that they had not been 'tropicalised', and were thus useless. The capital was lost. 'Well, you have tried it now', Akbar reports his father as saying. 'It isn't as easy as it looks'. Mr. CR seems to have regarded the whole fiasco as the price of a valuable lesson, though there is little doubt that Akbar is waiting another and a sounder opportunity. The younger boys seem to be making the most of what is their best hope. The second son has just taken his A-levels and the third his O-levels. They want to get to the university or into some other form of higher education, the younger one to read mathematics.

Though the CRs have kin in this country, they are all young and only one is married. They amount to four households comprising eight people, all of whom are nephews or nieces of Mr. CR. One household in the Kensal Rise area includes four nephews, two of whom are at school, while the elder two are working students. One nephew, who has completed his accountancy course, has bought a house in Kilburn, which is partly let. Another, living with his younger brother in the same road as the first, is Aziz C's original partner in the television repair business. The seventh, a niece, was a nurse at a Cambridge hospital. She has recently married an Englishman.

As far as kinship is concerned, then, the CRs are by no means isolated in Britain. Apart from the marriage of the two daughters the original family is intact. Thse daughters have married Ismailis who have themselves kin in England, though not of the elder CRs' generation. Furthermore the CRs associate with kin, almost to the exclusion of anyone else. On Saturday they keep open house, which means, on the whole, that they are visited by their married daughters with their husbands, and occasionally by Mr. CR's nephews. No doubt now that Aziz and Nurbanu C have also moved to Wembley, the visiting between them will not decrease, though they have seen one another frequently ever since the Cs' marriage. Indeed, Nurbanu saw her mother every day when they both lived in Kensal Rise. The younger sons seem homebound to a great degree. Akbar CR has an interest in decorative woodwork and leatherwork which keeps him at home. The CRs have a large television, but they have no car.

No one in the house goes to Palace Gate. Mr. CR argues that it is too tiring to go there after work, and on Fridays it is impossible. They mention the common myth that people standing in the road and on the pavement by the mosque have been moved on by the police, and that there is a local resentment about the crowds which gather on Fridays. (There may be some truth in this, but it remains a myth, for it justifies non-attendance at the jamatkhana. The implication is that by not going to Palace Gate on a Friday one is helpir preserve the good name of the community. It has even been said that there have been fights outside the mosque on a Friday. It is impossible to meet people who have been abused by local residents, witnessed fights, or been moved along by the police.) The CRs say they pray at home, and the younger children certainly do. The CRs, in short, feel that they have little need of the mosque. They discharge their religious duty to their own satisfactior without attending it, and they do not feel any the less Ismaili. Mr. CR and Akbar often talk of other religions - Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism - which they regard as fundamentally at one with their own. But Ismailism is best, and they are not seriously tempted to deviate.
(In their house I noticed a little alcove at the

top of the bannisters and suggested this may have been intended for a plaster statue of a saint of the stairway. Why, I asked, did not Akbar put a picture of the Aga Khan in the place. He pointed out that each room had such a picture already, but thought that, suitably renovated, a small victorian statuette of a Greek god which he had lately acquired would do very nicely.)

The CRs may thus be said to have solved their housing, job and educational problems without the intervention of any community institution. That Palace Gate exists is for them no more than a comforting thought. They are Ismailis by name and by persuasion. They associate with other Ismailis who are also kin. But they do not participate, either as beneficiaries or as benefactors, in the organised life of the community. Akbar, who has somehow slipped through the higher educational net, wishes to try his hand at some form of business. No finance is available, however, and his own earnings are largely absorbed in paying off the mortgage on the house, a house which is unlikely ever to be a productive investment. Thus he has turned to working wood to make small articles of furniture.

The Cs

The Cs, as we have seen, are part of the circle of the CRs. They are of the same generation as Akbar CR and have been married for approximately the same length of time. Unlike Akbar CR, however, Aziz C's parents remain in East Africa. In other ways too the two couples present some striking contrasts.

In the last chapter the details of Aziz C's business career were mentioned. He has been in England about as long as Akbar CR, though he came under somewhat different circumstances. Once here he learned a trade which has proved to be a foundation for a thriving, though as yet small business. His social milieu is very different from that of the CRs. While the CRs are self-sufficient and family-centred, the Cs show signs of reaching into other sections of the community in making their contacts. Naturally, Aziz C retains his friendships made before his marriage with unattached Ismaili men. As with the CRs, this circle is primarily kin-

based, as will be seen. The kin it comprehends comprise a selection of the possible kinsmen of Aziz C in England, however. I shall narrate here two examples of the hospitality of Aziz C which demonstrate perhaps the poles of his social sphere.

In February 1970, Aziz C held a cards party at his flat in Kensal Rise, this being the flat he had taken on his marriage and before he had taken over the flat vacated by his in-laws (the CRs) when they moved out to Wembley. At this time Aziz had not yet been joined in London by his brother, Gulamhusain, who was still in Edinburgh working for the Scottish Electricity Board. From Aziz's own household, therefore, there were present Aziz, his wife Nurbanu, and his cousin Gulzar who, it will be recalled, was then staying with them. The guests were four unmarried Ismaili men in their 20s or early 30s. Two of these were the respective sons of Aziz's mother's two sisters, and thus his first cousins. Another was the paternal cousin of one of these two. The third, not immediately related to any of the others, lives close by the flat which the three cousins share. Thus the evening represents the coalescence of two households, plus the presence of a friend (since school days) and neighbour of the visiting household.

Besides these two parallel cousins, Aziz C has two matrilateral cross-cousins in London, both of them women now married, and one of them referred to here as Farida A. They live in Wimbledon and Muswell Hill, and have very little contact with Aziz C in England, though they went to his wedding. They were not invited to the cards party, and - if the truth were known - would be very unlikely to invite Aziz C and his wife to their own houses. These two women are also cousins of Aziz's cousins who were guests on the evening in question. They do not even know one another's addresses. I shall try to indicate more about why this discrimination between kin is made later on.

The tone of the evening is very different from that of the social occasions of the CR household. Conversation centres on the food (now

that Aziz was married he could provide his erstwhile peers with Indian food), the community (perhaps partly, though certainly not entirely induced by my presence), and the game itself. At all levels of the community Ismailis are avid card-players, though the games current in different places and among different circles vary, as they do among all class societies.[1] The game played at Aziz's was flush, a variant on the poker theme and sometimes known as three-card brag. Aziz had once an interest in a casino (a small gambling club), and produced professional-looking plastic chips dating from that period. At the end of the evening individual gains and losses were within £5-limits.

Aziz's guests are not notable for their piety (which is not to say that playing flush for money is any evidence of a lack of it). When the conversation turned to things Ismaili, therefore, a greater degree of spontaneous scepticism appeared than might be found in other sectors of the community. At the time the new Begum Aga Khan was pregnant. Should she give birth too soon after the wedding Ismailis will call it a miracle, says one of the visitors, to shocked laughter. The young men also took it upon themselves to criticise dassondh, the subject being dismissed with the comment 'money, money, money'. In fact Aziz's guests at this party were of the most dissident part of the Ismaili community in Britain. None of them attended Palace Gate though the flat where three of them lived was only a short bus ride away. None of them would have considered regularly paying dassondh, at least in Britain, and in this their criticisms were sincere, if flippant. The girlfriends of at least two of them were English and, apart from Aziz C and their flatmates, none of them associated regularly with Ismailis except in the context of football (see chapter 9).

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1. Principally bridge, rummy and flush are played, sometimes for stakes which may be high. (On the other hand, the game is more important than the wager, so that Ismailis sometimes play pontoon for matches or monopoly for paper millions). There are, beyond these main social card games, a range of what might be called 'old ladies' games', which are repetitive in principle (like some of the conversations they provide occasion for) and which are played at an incredible speed.

Aziz's guests are a sample of the peer group from which his marriage removed him. They were his schoolfellows and his agemates. It is true that their occupations differ from his in the crucial sense of their being employed (as a bank clerk (Bank of China), a working accountancy student and an executive grade civil servant (Export Credits Guarantee Department)) while he is self-employed. Nevertheless, they were of his circle of associates, though the fact of his marriage has altered the relationships. On the other hand, unlike them, and unlike his in-laws, Aziz and Nurbanu do go to Palace Gate, though not as frequently as they might (they had, at the time, one car; now that Gulamhusain has joined them they dispose of another). Aziz says that he does give dassondh, a fact which there is no reason to question. How much and how frequently is another matter. It would be wrong to say that he was disappointed with the facilities made available by the community in Britain, but he has taken up the discrepancy between the help accessible to enterprising Ismaili businessmen at home and in Britain. He concludes that the council occupies itself too exclusively with Ismaili students whose presence is only ephemeral, and implies (incorrectly, as we shall see) that the council is itself composed of students.

Despite the fact that neither of his maternal cousins has much to do with him, their brother (Karim) and his wife who were in England en route for New York in 1970, were entertained by Aziz in some style. Unlike his sisters, this brother has never resided in Britain, having joined his father's business on leaving school. Like Aziz, therefore, he is a businessman pure and simple, and both can more or less deduce an annual turnover from a menu. Aziz took him to a restaurant (Veeraswamy's) calculated to leave the impression that some trouble has been taken for the client's comfort. Had Karim been staying with either of his sisters, this would almost certainly not have happened, but the visitors were renting a flat from an (unrelated) Ismaili party. No one could claim a monopoly of his company, nor aspire to manage his social contacts.

Why did Aziz C elect to provide this particular cousin of his a very lavish treatment in London? The answer is extraordinarily complex. Somewhat simplified, it would take account of two sets of factors. The first would be the standing of Aziz's family in East Africa, the second his own standing in London. Karim's father saw his sisters marry unwisely so far as the economic prospects of their spouses were concerned. Thus Aziz's father has for most of his life worked in a bank and has only recently become a businessman. He has always been concerned with theology, and has succeeded in educating Aziz's sisters and Gulamhusain on a relatively small income. But it is a hard world and Aziz C's parents will never aspire to the status of his mother's brother and his family, even though Karim's father originally worked alongside Aziz's father in the bank.[1] Karim is the only son to be playing a full part in his father's business. Hence, in terms of the way Karim's acceptance of his hospitality might appear in East Africa, Aziz was trying to say that the status gap between the families was now closed.

In East Africa it is Karim's social stratum which dominates the offices available in community institutions. In London, as will be seen, this is not the case. Karim himself is not familiar with the situation in the London jamat. Freed from the tutelage of his sisters he was therefore drawn to a cousin of his own occupation. Aziz, seeing his target clearly, was thus able to imply a parity between his role and that of his guest, but a parity which is invalid.

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1. There was a difference: while Aziz's father's family had never been prominent or rich, Karim's father had been reduced to working in the bank by his own father's bankruptcy. Karim's grandfather had been a wealthy merchant and extraordinarily active in community affairs, for which he had been awarded the title of vazier long before such titles became debased by proliferation.

The relaxed, inward-looking social world of the CRs contrasts sharply with the strategy of Aziz C's social contacts. It is true that he too organises one sector of his entertaining on an expressive rather than an instrumental basis, but he also reveals his ambitions in his other contacts. He aspires to be 'socially mobile', but his conception of this mobility appears to be couched largely in terms of the Ismaili community's systems of stratification both in London and East Africa.

The As

The history of the As was sketched out in the last chapter. Here I want to say something about their position in the Ismaili community in London, a position which is very different from that of the Cs and the CRs. Externally their position is not dissimilar from that of the Cs. They are a little younger, though they have been married a few months longer. They too have recently moved into a mortgaged house. They have a car, and live a similar distance from Palace Gate. Both couples are at work, and there are as yet no children. The direct income of the As is probably slightly less than that of the Cs. Farida A and Aziz C are first cousins, born in Mombasa, where as young men their fathers were both bank clerks.

Apart from the Cs' wedding, however, and the case of Farida A's brother, their social circles are more or less discontinuous. If Aziz C's social circle is traditionally recruited (through kin and peer group), that of the As is far more free-ranging. It is they who are in the position to select the kin relationships which are operative for them in this country. They may be said to be prominent in the London community, to the extent that they were invited to be mukhi and mukhiani in 1970 (reluctantly declining on grounds of examination pressure). How does it happen that they are by status a long reach beyond the position of the Cs?

Here again, it is important to take into account both the East African and the English elements of the situation. In East Africa, as has been remarked, Farida A's parental family have for long enjoyed a position far above that of either the CRs (now in England) or the parents of Aziz C.

On the other hand, the parents of Sadru A were, until the fairly recent past, of little social consequence. Their fortunes have bloomed in the last 15 years, however, Sadru A's father himself will never, perhaps, be a community leader, but he is now in a position to provide his children with the wherewithal to achieve it. Sadru A's parents are rich parvenus, to the extent that opinion in Farida A's family was against their marriage (for which everyone has yet to be forgiven). The As were not an 'old' family. They had no history of community service and, until the present generation, no education beyond the merely ordinary. They were not kandan - at least not to the extent of Farida A's family. They were (and are) kindly, hard-working, pious, far-sighted, generous, intelligent people, added to which they are now rich. The defect was in the reputation which they had not then made, and which it is now too late for the parents to make. What they have accumulated can bring honour to their grey hairs only through the agency of their children.

It is therefore evident that the fear of the family of Farida A that in East Africa the marriage of their daughter to Sadru A was an inferior match, and one which might impair their standing, has proved - so far - unfounded; instead, the wealth of the As has augmented the status which they hoped their daughter might enjoy. But this has happened in London. It might be said to be a condition of its happening that it was not in East Africa, for the qualifications of the young As would not have brought them to so much prominence there, where they would have been in competition with the established elite already experienced in office and used to authority. Sadru A's antecedents would also have been more noticeable. When the As speak of returning to East Africa, they betray a diminishing enthusiasm, although Sadru 's father's business is there and he not as vigorous in its administration as formerly. (Of course there are a number of important factors besides this in deciding whether to stay in Britain, return home or move on to Canada.)

The As' range of social contact is wide, perhaps more because of Farida's career than because of Sadru's It is also exhaustingly full,

the kin-based side of it threatening always to get out of control, at least whenever there are visitors from East Africa in Britain. It might be best to divide it into categories of junior kin on Sadru's side; senior kin on Farida's side; business contacts; members of the various educational peer groups they have occupied; family friends; and contacts in the official positions in the London jamat (these categories overlap considerably). It has previously been explained that the As occupy their house on the understanding that they provide a base for Sadru's three younger brothers and one younger sister who are all at various stages of their education in England. The/ boys are respectively a medical student; working on a farm preparatory to going to an agricultural college; and taking A-levels. The sister has just (1970) left a boarding school (Sherborne) to go to a secretarial college in London. Though the college is in Hampstead, and the travelling therefore tedious, she stays with the As in Wimbledon. There is talk of her getting or sharing a flat nearer the college, but nothing has so far happened. The A children thus have first claim on accommodation at the As' house. This has so far led to no serious conflict with the As' wider social obligations, though it detracts from the uninterrupted use which the As would like to think they had in their house.

Now that Farida A is installed in a commodious house, her kin in East Africa visiting Britain half expect to put up with her. Hitherto because of examination pressure (she has been taking Law Society examinations after voluntarily disbarring herself) she has been able to contain the expectation. But at the end of the summer of 1970 she found herself with two brothers in Britain, one accompanied by his wife, the other by his son, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and niece. Her sister in Muswell Hill has no room to spare in her small flat. The situation was complex in view of the differential status of the parties concerned, the younger brother (Karim) being a cut beneath the elder brother (Shamshu), who is a wealthy dentist and probably now the leading edge of the whole family's

East African prestige. Karim went to New York and returned with a few days to spare and nowhere fixed to stay. Farida's siter found a flat in Hampstead for Shamshu's party, but their return flight was delayed after the expiry of the letting. The happy result was that Farida was able to offer to accommodate both parties, in each case for a few days, immediately after her examinations, though Shamshu's party were eventually to extend the lease on their flat and so remain there. Sadru A raised no objection to this procedure, lending himself to the task of ferrying his affines to and from airports and termini. It is easy to see why - by offering accommodation to his wife's prestigious kin in London he was beating his affinal critics in East Africa to the punch. In any case, he is a hospitable man.

As has been pointed out, some of Farida A's cousins in London are ignored. Besides Aziz C and his brother she has kept up no contact at all with her mother's brother's widow and her three sons who have lived in North London for nearly twenty years. She learned only by a chance meeting in the street that the brothers had split up, that one was becoming a solicitor and that another was buying a house in the next road to where the As had lived in Putney. On the other hand she maintains close ties with her sister, who married an English journalist. Because of her sister's marriage outside the community there is only a muted social competition between them in community terms. The sister (Parveen), who is older, is unable to contribute the same prestige to the family. Her husband is benignly impervious to the role he would have to play, and perhaps it is just as well. But Parveen has the advantage of distance, which allows her to see situations fairly clearly, as well as a social ambiguity which allows her to modify family expectations which might, had she married an Ismaili of the same occupation as her husband, have been levied on her.

Both Farida and Sadru A are young professionals, she a lawyer and he an architect. What I have described as 'business contacts' refers, however, to their involvement with Sadru-père's interests in Britain. Thus they

keep closely in touch with an honorary uncle of Sadru's. This man (Shiraz) came to Britain some six years ago, leaving the bulk of his capital behind. In East Africa he had been a businessman; in London he began an 'import/ export' business. Today he has six houses in the Putney area, his own bungalow in Croydon, and his wife drives a Jaguar XJ6 (he has given up driving in favour of Scotch). Sadru A says that when his father heard that Shiraz was leaving for Britain he caught up with him at the airport and asked him to see whether he could sell produce from the As' farm (copra, coir, etc.) in Britain. He could and did. He also supervised the family's property in England until Sadru A was old enough to handle it himself. Sadru A is a director of his father's firm (along with his father and a cousin) and so has a direct interest in and responsibility for their exports. The As have both been very closely involved in the running of the shamba, and there are frequent telephone calls and telegrams exchanged between them and Sadru's father. It is said that Farida wrought a revolution in the office organization during the few months between her marriage and the As' returning to England. Sadru's contacts with Shiraz are therefore frequent, though the latter is some 20 years older. In some ways Sadru takes Shiraz as a model of success, and is tempted to move into business himself rather than follow his own appointed calling. He notes with approval, for example, that Shiraz is his own master, working at home and determining his own hours of business. He points out that even in architecture the leaders of the profession are merely businessmen, negotiating contracts and managing their offices, while the creative work is done by relatively junior staff. Why not found a property empire which would allow him to do the same, at the same time giving him some scope to exercise his professional skill?

Sadru has had also a longstanding friendship with the estate agent, an Englishman, who manages the family property directly. It was he who arranged the various purchases and who collects the rents on the lettings. He was introduced to them by Shiraz, with whom he has also done business.

When Farida's brother Shamshu was in London this year, the As introduced him to the estate agent who found him a house to invest in. Thus the estate agent benefits by his association with the As, while the As are able to recommend him to other Ismailis as a sound man. When Karim brought him a duty-free bottle of scotch, Sadru mentioned that it would all go on his estate agent and Shiraz, and Farida complains about the amount of whisky they get through without drinking much of it themselves.

Besides these flows of hospitality based upon kin and business relationships, the As retain links with members of their various peer groups, both Ismaili and otherwise. Some of their school friends are in London, one of them having bought a house in Wimbledon (the As lent him £200 towards the deposit). Time seems to be vitiating these links, however, and most of them involved only a desultory contact. Sadru A seems to have formed no durable ties with his fellow students of architecture, nor to have more than a relationship of colleague with other people in his office. By contrast, Farida A retains a great many ties with her former colleagues, both from her days as a Bar student and from her year as an occasional student at the university. Thus there was for long a regular meeting point on Thursdays at the India Tea Centre. This was attended by her sister, Parveen, who then happened to work nearby, a Bengali girl whom she had known at Lincoln's Inn and who lived near to Parveen, an Englishwoman, also from Lincoln's Inn and then a justice's clerk, and occasionaly one or two others. Thursday evening is late opening in Oxford Street (where the India Tea Centre is), so that a number of advantages were secured by the arrangement. But Parveen has now taken a job elsewhere in London and the Bengali girl has gone to Calcutta. Farida A still sees her sister and her English friend from Lincoln's Inn very frequently; but she seems to be making ties as well with people from the solicitors' office where she is articled. While Sadru was away for a few days presenting and being examined on his final dissertation, an English girl whom she had known at the university happened to be passing through London,

and stayed with her. The As also occasionally invite groups of young Ismailis to their house for a day, acquaintances and acquaintances of acquaintances. They seem to enjoy knowing a lot of people.

The As are very regular attenders at Palace Gate. They do not now go on Friday unless there is some imperative reason, preferring Wednesdays and the weekend. In one way and another they are on good terms with the officers of the community, but the mosque is also a place where one can expect to meet family friends of an older generation. The As exchange information and salutations with a good many people when they go to Palace Gate. They also belong to the Life Dedication mandli which is one of the few which functions in England. But the As do not seem to intervisit with people of their parents' generation.

The As were, as I have mentioned, invited to serve the jamat as mukhi and mukhiani. They are prominent in the London community, and know a number of officers of the community on intervisiting terms. One member of the council has been a colleague of Farida A's on the course for the Law Society examinations, he too having disbarred himself. He lives near them, and they frequently travelled in together. The As intervisit with this man and his (English) wife. The same applies to another member of the council and his wife, a sociology student. The outgoing mukhi in 1970 was also a friend of theirs, who lived in Putney. With the older council members (see next chapter), the As are not so close, there being no kin or peer connection.

Thus it can be seen that the world of the As is clearly distinguishable from those of the CRs and the Cs. They reach into the centre of the community, at least in things social (an important caveat, as we shall see), while at the same time they stretch out beyond it, including non-Ismailis in their circle of friends and contacts (to recapitulate, their English estate agent, Shiraz's Parsee wife, Parveen's English husband, Farida's Bengali and English friends from the Inns of Court and the university). The As read The Times, but Sadru pounced with such regular delight on copies of Private Eye, with its esoteric English humour, that Parveen and her husband bought him a subscription for Christmas. Their style of life,

their political opinions[1] and their professional skills they derive largely from Britain, but their style of life and their professional skill serve to further their standing in the community, and hence in turn the renown of their families in East Africa. The brilliancy of their success in London they have worked up from raw materials furnished by their parents. It might be said that symbols they have accumulated - house, car, education, reliability in kinship relations, punctiliousness in religious observance, etc. - are vitiated by the absence implied by the lack of reputation of the parents of Sadru A. On the other hand, perhaps it is this which drives on their efforts to establish themselves in Ismaili society. They do and can look beyond it, but for the time being at least their aspirations seem to lie within its framework, just as do those of the Cs. The As are in a position to enjoy success from the beginning. The could fade away from the community, merging themselves into the class to which they belong in English society. But there is too much to gain, and they are gaining it. On the other hand they are not of the decision-making elite within the community. As matters stand they are unlikely to join it.

The Bs

Amir and Rehmet B have all the advantages by birth and attainment of the As, and then more. They have not, however, attempted to cash their virtues in the same way. They are not active in the London jamat, and have little or no desire to be so. For them the question of returning to

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1. The As eventually voted Labour in 1970, after having seemed apathetic at first. In this they differed from the Cs (Nurbanu voted Labour 'by accident' because she had thought there was a Liberal candidate, while Aziz spoiled his ballot, having intended to vote Liberal). Before the election Rehmet and Amir B were arguing over how they should vote, she intending to vote Labour, and he favouring the Conservatives on economic grounds. Eventually Amir voted Labour too, really on grounds of social policy. The CRs voted Labour, as did Farida'A's sister Parveen. Mohamed K, secretary of the council, was intending to vote Conservative before the election because he favoured heavy restrictions on immigration. Of the guests at Aziz C's cards party, one was 'strong Labour because he was a socialist (!)', another had voted Liberal in 1966 because he then was living in Kensington and it was the only hope of defeating the Conservative candidate. But no one is active politically in the sense of belonging to any party (though Rehmet B took part in one of the earliest student sit-ins in Britain when at the university).

East Africa does not arise. If they leave Britain, they will go to North America. Their points of contact with the circle of the As are few; they know the As - through Parveen - but are suspicious of them, a feeling which is more than reciprocated, despite the degree to which one would have thought they shared a background in common. They represent not only different social strategies and inclinations, but also differently evaluated groups within the community. The evaluation of these groups with respect to one another is uncertain, and increasingly so, with the result that one senses an element of confrontation in situations where both are present.

Something of the background of the Bs will be recalled from the previous chapter. Amir and Rehmet are the children of families whose reputations and fortunes are secure. There is not in their history any recent period where they were less than prominent. This prominence extends, or extended, beyond the community, for it so happens that while Amir B's uncle was agitating for early independence, and a member of delegations pressing the case, in the later 50s and 60s, Rehmet's father was actively supporting the reverse policy, also as a member of various delegations to London. On both sides there have been holders of high community office. On his mother's side, Amir's relatives comprise what must be - collectively - the most powerful Ismaili family in East Africa.

Despite this the parents of both Amir and Rehmet have found their influence in eclipse over the past ten years. In the case of Rehmet's parents, this follows a business failure, as well as being a consequence of having backed the wrong horse at the time of approaching independence. Rehmet's family are now in much reduced circumstances, and she and her younger sister (now a student of chemistry in Brighton[1]) had difficulty in financing themselves. Only the fact that before the crash her elder sister was already a qualified and practising lawyer (in East Africa) made it possible, since the community bursary committee took the (unwarranted)

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1. Having tansferred from her original college in Edinburgh, where she felt isolated.

view that a family like hers must be able to raise funds. Economic disaster is not unqualified downward mobility, however. Rehmet, in common with the rest of her family, remains kandan, respected, patrician.

In some ways the decline of Mr. B (Amir's father) seems self-imposed. He was - as was noted - close to the previous Aga Khan. Sultan Mohamed Shah, by all accounts (including his own), was much concerned with health and lent his medically qualified followers more than half an ear. Sometimes he gave individual Ismailis direct advice about the improvement of their health, and in turn they asked for such advice.[1] Mr B now regards himself as 'non grata' with the present Aga Khan, and cites some misunderstanding which seems to have involved malice on someone's part as the cause of it. Again, his brother who was more influential than he himself is now dead. Mr. B is a man whose authority depended on the respect of the imam for his judgment much more than on his autonomous power over fellow Ismailis. Though he owned property he was primarily a dentist, and therefore not at the centre of control of capital accumulation within the community. More important than these factors, however, is his decision to settle in Britain. It may be true that he felt that his position was already prejudiced under the new Aga Khan, but this move sealed his decline.

Though the families of the Bs are known to most Ismailis in London, the Bs themselves are not. Amir's father's influence was even in its heyday a rather private phenomenon, although he was for many years a leading member of the Nairobi provincial council and a territorial councillor. It is unlikely that many Ismailis known that he lives in London, much less that his son and daughter-in-law do too. Of course the more significant members of the London community know Mr. B, but that does not mean that he has much in common with them, or much influence over

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1. Unwisely, no doubt, though his doctor seems to have been impressed by so knowledgeable a layman: Frischauer, p. 157.

them. He rarely attends Palace Gate, though he lives within a sharp ten-minutes' walk of it. And Amir B takes his father as a model in this. On the other hand Amir's mother does go frequently to Palace Gate, at least once a week, and often in the company of Rehmet. They avoid Fridays, however, because they say it is crowded to the point of extreme discomfort. Rehmet goes to the mosque on other occasions as well, though not necessarily in anyone's company.

As one would expect, the social range of the Bs is wide. Unlike Sadru A, Amir B retains a good many friendships formed both at school and while reading for his degree. Most of these friends are as yet unmarried, so that it is difficult to predict what will become of this association; most of them are also non-Ismaili. Despite that, Amir's closest friend is a cousin on his mother's side who was at the same public school, and who maintains much the same kind of suspicious attitude to the community as does Amir himself. Both of Amir B's elder sisters have married out of the community, the elder to an Italian dentist in Nairobi, the younger to an Englishman who is something (i.e. something wealthy) in the City. Amir B's alienation from the community is thus more than an accident of his having gone to school in England for, apart from kin, there is no sphere of his life which involves Ismailis as such.

Largely because they were bullied into it (and partly out of curiosity) the Bs were induced to attend the July 1970 kushiali at the Alexandra Palace. The As were in the same party, but while they soon drifted away talking to people who, as Farida A said afterwards, 'we only see at kushiali', the Bs remained <u>spectators.</u> Even Rehmet, who goes regularly to Palace Gate at quiet times, was interested most in the fashion sense being displayed ('I want to see if they're still wearing shiny saris'), and came away impressed by what she saw. Amir was looking for nothing specific, but seemed overwhelmed by the experience. 'Are all these people Ismailis? Where do they all come from? What are they all doing here?' were among the things he said, and he too seemed plased. It was as though

his 'Ismailiness', which had become increasingly abstract through the years, was suddenly related to something concrete, vital and enjoyable. Perhaps it is because of the risk of diluting this feeling that he has avoided Palace Gate as much since this particular kushiali as before.

The links of the Bs with the community are thus of a different kind from those of the As. To Rehmet the religion remains of great importance, though not the communal connotations of it. The distinction between her regular attendance at the mosque, where she seems to try to avoid rather than accost, and her dismissive attitude towards kushiali brings this out. Amir has not even this devotion, though he acknowledges his formal belief. The Bs do not need the community in which to establish themselves, for their families are established. On the other hand it does rather tend to turn the family as a whole in upon itself, so that Wednesdays are set aside as 'B night', when they both go to Amir's parents house for the evening, which usually involves Rehmet and her mother-in-law going to the mosque together. These conclaves produce an attitude to things Ismaili more articulate than is to be found elsewhere, for example the lethargy of the council, the overcrowding of the mosque (with solutions suggested, such as 'if I were as young as you, I'd shake them up. I'd call the police and complain that the fire regulations were being broken'), and religion itself. Like the CRs, the Bs discuss other religions ('you'll find my father-in-law more of a Buddhist than an Ismaili'). It is not that they attack individuals or aspire to introduce policies, for they have seen enough to know where the policies come from, but rather that they want to know what it is to be an Ismaili for them and what is the value of the religion and the pattern of association that surrounds it in Britain in 1970. Furthermore they are able to draw on sources of information denied others, for a constant stream of visitors from East Africa passes through the parents' house with information and opinion from the more powerful quarters. It is probable that Mr B knows more about the doings of the bureaucracy in East Africa than he does about the council of the London

jamat.

The Bs thus find themselves isolated in the London jamat. The bases of their influence have disappeared with their move to Britain, but the foundations of their prestige have not. They represent an outpost of the aristocracy of East African Ismailis, an aristocracy which has no part to play in a community dominated by their social inferiors without reference for themselves. At the same time the Bs have the option of alternative patterns of association. Mr B is thus an avid bridge player in non-Ismaili circles (he used to play at Crockfords) and a keen Rotarian. Through his profession he has come to know people in his neighbourhood. His daughters have married outside the community and his son is more at home with his former school friends than with the majority of Ismailis. Amir B does not give dassondh, and makes no apology for it; he asks what benefits are to be seen for it in this country, and argues that community capital must be being exported to other countries where the community is well able to look after itself. This year Amir and Rehmet B went to Greece and Rhodes for their holiday. They went alone, and with no intention of contacting any kin. Before they went they expressed their doubts about the Colonels, but repressed them. It was a very English sort of holiday.

Some problems arise partly because Rehmet's family is in East Africa. For example she cannot accomodate any kin who happen to be in England, her flat being too small and Amir being against providing such facilities. Thus when a cousin of Rehmet's arrived at their house without warning in the middle of the night, the best they could do was find them a hotel; and the result was a series of disapproving letters from her kin in East Africa. Nor can Rehmet provide her sister with any accommodation. In this there is no doubt that she envies Farida A. But it is difficult to believe that matters will be much changed when they move into their own house (even assuming they do not go to Canada), for Amir very explicitly opposes the ubiquity of kinship——based claims to hospitality. Unlike the As there would be no question of their looking for a house with their kin

in mind. (Since Amir inherited a large amount of money direct from his grandfather they could buy their own house if they wished.)

The Ds

It will be recalled that the Ds, Nizar and Munira, and their two small daughters have lived in Rainham, Kent, since 1965. The Ds, that is, have succumbed to the pressures which drive young married couples out to the commuter belt. They are thus socially as well as spatially in some senses outside the London community.

Munira's father was a very wealthy man, a money-lender by profession, but one who in some other ways deviated from the Ismaili pattern. It is said the family 'lived very simply, like Banyanis', and there was a story that they were only very recent converts to Ismailism. Their food was 'very Hindu' and Munira's father's friends were Hindus as much as Ismailis. They were Gujaratis, and Munira's father apparently used to say that none of his daughters would ever marry a Jungbari,[1] which is ironic because Nizar is a Jungbari. Perhaps partly as a consequence of this the Ds speak even to one another in English, and become self-conscious when addressed in Gujarati or Kacchi. (A friend of Munira D makes a point of this, noting that she invariably replies in English.) It is evidence of the fact that Munira's father was kandan that he was so forward-looking as to his daughters' education. Munira, the second eldest daugheter, was thus one of the very first girls to come to England (in about 1956) for the last few years of school and then to train as a pharmaceutical dispenser.[2] Munira D's father never went to mosque was little concerned with public opinion but was nevertheless much respected. Everyone knew that they were very wealthy, but 'you wouldn't know from the way they lived'.

1. From Zanzibar and thought typically to be Kacchi-speaking, highly proficient in Swahili and probably, through Arab influence, superstitious.

2. Her elder sister, Kathun, was married very young and soon divorced. Perhaps it was this which persuaded Munira's father to educate his daughters (After his death their mother lived in England while Munira and her younger sisters completed their schooling here, but then returned to EastAfrica.)

Nizar D comes from a diametrically different type of Ismaili family. His father had a small business in Zanzibar and lived very much up to the expectations made of his class. He was not a magnate of the community, but nonetheless a part of it. His elder son followed him into business (moving from Zanzibar before the revolution), and their combined efforts made it possible for Nizar to study civil engineering at Woolwich Polytechnic in London. His profession was his real inheritance. Since first coming to London in 1959 (two years after Munira), Nizar D has never been back to East Africa. In that time his father has died and his family moved away from Zanzibar. Whatever personal standing his father had has been dissipated by the elimination of the Ismaili community in Zanzibar. Nizar's brother has visited them twice in recent years, and this year (1970) his mother has come over for four months (not having seen her younger son for over 10 years). Nizar D speaks often of visiting East Africa again, and intends to do so in 1971, but there is little for him to visit.

The Ds were married in 1963, before Nizar had finished his course. Although Munira was left money by her father,[1] the subsequent course of their fortunes has depended entirely on Nizar. No doubt her capital is tied up in property, as a form of insurance. At any rate, after their marriage, the Ds were private tenants (in Kennington). For them the choice of an inner suburban house was unrealistic, having no call on local authority finance or on resources of their own. At that time, Nizar earned rather little, since he was working his way through the practical part of his course. The result was that in 1964 they moved to the outer suburbs. In this they were pioneers for there were then no other Ismailis in the

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1. This too is taken as a mark of his distinction - not only did he provide for the education of his daughters, but he provided for them in his will as well. Reduction in the dependence of women was part of the process of 'westernization' mentioned in chapter 5.

Medway towns. For a time Munira worked in London, thus maintaining some links with her kin and the community, since she could stay a few hours to go to Palace Gate. Nizar was also working in London then, but Munira soon got a job in Chatham. Soon after that Azmeena was born and Munira's working life was over. Nizar was not much bothered about the mosque, even though his office was quite nearby, in Victoria. His energies were absorbed by his garden and his children, as well as by badminton, which he still regularly plays, and mathematics, with which he had had some difficulty in his examinations. In fact Nizar had his timetable trimmed to a fine art so as to avoid the most crowded trains on the North Kent line while getting home in the shortest possible time. The fact that it was three years after moving to Rainham before the Ds could afford a car (they had a scooter) increased their isolation. In 1970, some six months after they had discovered the existence of the Chatham jamatkhana, it was over two years since they had been to Palace Gate.

The Ds kept up other contacts, however. Munira's three sisters were all in England after the move to Rainham. Her youngest sister, Shamin, took a course in domestic science. She was married in 1969 to an Ismaili from Pakistan. Rabia trained as a beautician. In 1970 she married an Italian and went to live in Dusseldorf. Until their marriages both these girls visited their sister from time to time, staying in Rainham. Munira's elder sister, Kathun, who had been married and divorced in East Africa, and who had come to England where she learned dressmaking, also came occasionally until she married a Ceylonese and went to Ceylon. Tilak, her husband, was, like Nizar, a civil engineer. Munira's father is dead, but she has visited her mother twice in Mombasa in the last five years, and her mother has been once to Britain. Her brother, who is in business in the Congo (Kinshasa), and who is married to a Swiss girl, also came on holiday to London. Munira has three other brothers, one also in the Congo, the eldest in East Africa (where he carried on his father's business until prevented by a heart complaint), and a third in Pakistan; but with these brothers she has had little contact in recent years. The Ds have a

number of non-Ismaili friends of long standing. They intervisit with an Austrian couple living in Germany (the wife was a penfriend of Munira's at school), and there are close ties with an English couple again originating with Munira's meeting the wife, this time at college (where they were both taking A-levels). Nizar became friendly with an English fellow engineer and his wife with whom they also intervisit. But Munira has lost touch completely with one of her closest schoolfriends (who married a Canadian, settled in north London, cut herself off from the community as totally as possible), and contacts with another Ismaili school friend also living in London have declined almost to vanishing point.

Nizar and Munira took an interest in their locality as well. Nizar, as was remarked, is an enthusiastic badminton player, turning out regularly for a local club. Munira could not avoid (even had she wished it) the life of the estate on which they lived. She became involved in morning coffee circles with the other housewives. As Azmeena grew up she played with the neighbours' children, and the Ds found themselves babysitting reciprocally with some of their neighbours. They helped at the school bazaar because, as they put it, Azmeena would soon be going there so they might as well start helping now, and Nizar now goes to parent-teacher meetings. When the Ds moved to Rainham the houses on the estate were all in various stages of construction, and other estates have been built nearby since then: there was no established community which they could ignore because it ignored them, and they were drawn irresistibly into the life of the locality.

Thus the Ds, like the Bs and the CRs, were becoming outsiders so far as the London jamat was concerned. Their contacts were with neighbours, friends, who were recruited largely from outside the community, workmates, and kin. In many ways they had begun to be assimilated into the life of their neighbourhood, and this was accelerated when, in 1969, Nizar took a job 'on site' about an hour's drive from Rainham. At that point they ceased to have any routine contact with London at all, certainly none with any organised community activity. Perhaps partly because of the

linguistic disparity between them their daughters were growing up with a working knowledge only of English (though Azmeena understands a certain amount of Gujarati she either cannot or more likely will not speak it), to the extent that Munira is considering sending them to East Africa for six months before they start school so as to learn Gujarati and acquire the rudiments of their religion. How far the Ds have deviated from the Ismaili norm emerges from the way Nizar speaks of his career prospects: he says that what he is looking forward to now is finishing his site experience with the big private contractor he works for and 'going into semi-retirement with a local authority', a consummation which Munira's brother-in-law has already achieved. The Ds say that they are thinking of moving, but that it partly depends on where Nizar gets a job, and in any case something always crops up so now they have to decorate their house through.

The slow slide of the Ds away from Ismailism has been checked by the very factors which had helped to produce it. Just as the logic of their housing situation drove them to buy a house in the commuter belt, so other Ismailis found themselves coming to lodge in the Medway basin. Of most immediate importance to the Ds was the arrival of Kathun and her husband. Tilak had found his hands tied by corruption and lack of equipment in Ceylon and decided to come back to Britain, the better to practise his art. (It seems that Kathun was not unhappy in Ceylon, though naturally there were some problems; professional frustration was the real moving force in their return) After staying with the Ds for a few months (an arrangement which led to some disruptive hints about overcrowding from their neighbours) Tilak and Kathun bought a house of a similar design to the Ds' about 10 minutes' walk away. This was in 1968. Now they have two daughters. Tilak too commuted to a London office for a time, but then he took a job locally with the Medway Water Board.

The Ds thus found themselves within easy reach of another at least partly Ismaili family. Then, in October 1969, Munira was shopping one Saturday morning in Gravesend when someone tapped her on the shoulder and asked her if she were Ismaili. It was the wife of the mukhi of the Chatham

jamatkhana which had by then been functioning for some eighteen months. A chance short circuit of this kind showed how deficient the channels of communication which one would expect to flow through Palace Gate had become. The Ds were not using the distance to Palace Gate as a cover for a general moratorium on religious observance, for since they heard of the Chatham mosque they have been regular attenders, going once a month at Chandrat, and for kushialis and Nawroz. They take their children, and Kathun and her elder daughter go too (some delicate problems were overcome when Kathun's daughter was baptised at the Chatham mosque, nobody there being willing to raise the matter of Tilak's non-Ismailiness).

What kind of an Ismaili presence does the Chatham mosque signify? First, although there is a jamatkhana there is nothing which could really be called a jamat. The Ismailis who go to the Chatham mosque might be called a congregation, for apart from the mutually related families among them they seem not to associate on any basis other than religious observance. The catchment of the mosque is as yet very small, comprising thirteen adults and sixteen children divided between seven households. In all cases the basic structure of the household is the same as that of the Ds, that is a fairly young couple (husbands' ages from 26 to 38) with young children (except that in one case there are three cousins of the husband resident in the house while they take their A-levels). Each household has acquired its house through self-generated resources (including mortgages), and none includes the representatives of wealthy East African families.[1] Household by household the catchment of the Chatham mosque is as follows:

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1. There is one such family in Bromley, still with interests in East Africa, but they prefer Palace Gate (which is somewhat nearer); this family consists of two households, the junior of a daughter, her husband and their baby daughter. This woman was Munira D's bridesmaid and her husband is a friend of Nizar D; though now they seem to see little of one another.

1) The Ds

2) Munira D's sister (her husband) and daughters

3) The mukhi of the mosque, his wife and their infant daughter. The mukhi formerly had a house in Southfields (on a mortgage) which was partly let out to Ismaili students on a bed and breakfast basis. At that time he was a working accountancy student. They moved to Chatham in 1967, selling the Southfields house. Far from letting out any part of their new home, they converted the one spare room into the mosque. This was at the point where the husband, having qualified, took a job locally as an accountant and thus ceased to commute. The husband had formerly been mukhi at Palace Gate.

4) Husband, wife, infant son and three cousins. In this case the wife is Irish, but now a practising Ismaili. The husband is a civil servant in the DEP; he has an M.Sc. in psychology. They live in Plumstead, but go regularly to the Chatham mosque, rather than Palace Gate. They manage to accommodate the three cousins of the husband while they take their A-levels.

5) Husband, wife and one child. They have lived in Bexley for about two years. The husband is a civil engineering student at present working locally for a large firm.

6) Husband, wife and four children. The husband is a motor mechanic, working locally. They have lived in the area (Gravesend) for about three years. The wife is kamadiani of the Chatham jamatkhana.

7) Husband, wife and two children. The husband, a laboratory technician commuting to London, is the brother of the husband in 6). They have lived in Strood since 1966. The wife is a nurse.

The heads of households of the families using the Chatham mosque are thus all employed in white-collar jobs or, in one case, in a skilled manual occupation. Only two of them commute to London though there is, of course, a tendency for people moving out to the commuter belt to look for a job locally as soon as they can. In any case one of the commuters lives in Plumstead, which is great deal nearer (as is Bexley) to central London (and thus Palace Gate) than it is to Chatham. In occupation, education, capital endowment and family structure they represent a fair sample of the commuter fringe population at large. They differ in their relationships outside the area, both with East Africa and with other Ismailis in the metropolitan area, and most strikingly in their religion.

The basis upon which the association of people at the Chatham jamatkhana takes place is religion. Two pairs of households are closely related but in the main relationships are not involuted by ties other than common religion. The members of the jamat do not intervisit with one another apart from attendance at the mosque. They do not work with or

for one another, and they are not involved in an all-embracing kin-network. They have come to know one another as a result of going to mosque. For the Ds, for example, the consequences of neglecting the Chatham mosque would be slight, and they would not even have to think of themselves as any the less Ismaili. In fact, as will appear, the Ds have succeeded in limiting the scope of the mosque to more strictly religious purposes. They treat the mosque very much as the chapel of some non-conformist denomination. In their lives the separation of sacred and profane is very sharp.[1]

Although the mukhi's family use the mosque every day for their prayers, the full assembly takes place only monthly, at Chandrat and on the occasions of Nawroz and the kushialis. It is open to anyone to join with the mukhi and his family, of course, but this does not happen. The mandli have not been instituted, although Munira, Kathun and the mukhi's wife are all members of the Life Dedication mandli. They have 'talked about it but never done anything'. Idd is not celebrated 'because it tends to fall on a weekday', and all the assemblies (including Chandrat) take place on Saturdays, when alone it is possible for most members to attend. However, the mosque has not always been confined purely to the ritual of Ismailism. It became customary for all those who attended Chandrat to eat together afterwards, and it was decided to take turns in suggesting the menu. This meal always took place at the mukhi's house, or actually inside the mosque. When the Ds' turn came, however, they suggested that there be no such meal, as it 'involved too much work for the mukhi's wife', and since then the practice has not been revived. Ways and means could have been found of avoiding the overwork had it been

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1. It was a surprise to find the Ds at the kushiali mentioned above, but it turned out that Nizar's mother, then staying with them, had insisted on their taking her.

wished, but no one seems to have felt strongly enough to want to raise the jamat above its purely religious role.

The Ismailis of North Kent therefore do not depend on the Chatham mosque either for their most significant relationships with other Ismailis, nor for their immediate social world. They have so far restricted it to the mere formalities of their religion. Without intruding far into the pattern of their lives, it allows them to feel that they are fulfilling the necessities of their faith. True, they are perhaps more highly integrated into the English towns in which they live than their fellows in London, but at the same time they go regularly to the jamatkhana. They are as good Ismailis as anyone else. In this they are above reproach, but the truth remains that they have anglicised Ismailism by the purely formal, religious role to which they have reduced it. It functions for them as no more than a denomination, an optional adjunct to their lives. The ethic which East African Ismailism developed, of the independent intellectual, or the self-employed (and employing)entrepreneur, has been denied in their lives to the point of Nizar D wanting to 'go into semi-retirement with a local authority'. Their aspirations have resolved themselves into the forms of better houses, better cars, good schools for their children and in general a comfortable suburban life for themselves. They are fully-accredited members of the property-owning democracy. Not one of the members of the jamat entertains the hope of going back to East Africa, despite the fact that many of them have skills which could well be exploited there.

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In the last chapter the dispersal of Ismailis through the British social structure was considered. Here I have attempted to sketch the various ways in which Ismailis have made their lives in the different structural situations which they now occupy. Clearly the range of occupational and social positions in which they are now placed is by no means as broad as society itself. They are concentrated in the professions, the semi-professions, skilled white-collar work, and in a few cases,

skilled manual occupations. But if they are concentrated in terms of British society as a whole, among themselves they appear to be widely differentiated.

It will be noticed that in the cases where Ismailis in this country have family in East Africa whose status is at least conceivably inter-dependent with that of the London section of the family, these Ismailis are relatively active in the community and ambitious. This would apply to the As and the Cs, as it would not to the Bs, CRs and Ds. These competitive households may be said to be oriented towards the East African hierarchy, using what can be gained in London to establish their position in it. From this it should not be inferred that the other households are non-competitive. The Bs, for example, must play the role of consumer up to the standards of the upper-middle class society in which they move, while the Ds have to maintain both the standards of their immediate contacts in their neighbourhood and on their estate and those of the network of friends, Ismaili and non-Ismaili, which they have built up. But the context of the status striving of the Bs and Ds is different from that of the As and Cs. Increasingly the former families are playing class roles which must take their chance as bearers of prestige within Ismailism. The As on the other hand find a certain conflict between their class role and their community one, their kinship obligations, for example, falling outside the former. In the interests of immediate community advantage they compromise favourably from the point of view of community status, with the result that their house tends to be full of visiting kin and the As have to resort to weekends in hotels to get away from it all. The Cs have reached a point where they actually solicit kin to stay with them, and of course Gulzar and Gulamhusain are now permanent and welcome fixtures in their household. The Cs are insulated from any other concept of kin relationship. The Ds, of course, experienced direct hostility on precisely this point when Tilak and Kathun came back from Ceylon. They were able to sustain it because it was of a non-recurring kind. The Bs,

though they have the room, do not put up Rehmet's sister during her vacations - Rehmet was surprised to see her at the kushiali which was mentioned above - and she stays with the widow of Mr. B's brother in Southfields (where Rehmet herself used to stay during her vacations). To the Cs and the CRs this would be unthinkable, while the As, given their experience in these things, would sympathise, though in their case they cannot default on more extensive obligations. In fine, it appears that at some levels of the community there is a real choice between the kind of symbols with which to accentuate one's success. One perspective looks to the Ismaili community, labouring under its edicts to provide kin their due and dassondh to the community; the other minimises rather than courts this aspect of life. The mosque is either ignored or reduced to a religious function, while the demands of kinship are seen as an increasing embarrassment.

One indicator of the extent to which Ismailis are defining themselves in terms of their social class in England as opposed to their community status might be the extent of exogamous marriage. Outmarriage is fairly frequent, and the cases assembled in the following table are not to be taken as exhaustive. The table includes only those who have married out and are resident in Europe or America, thus excluding a number of cases of intermarriage with Europeans and with members of other Asian communities in East Africa. (Marriages with Africans are not excluded, for within memory and knowledge there has been none.) There is no way of checking whether this list is representative of the outmarriages of Ismailis in Europe, or whether it is biased by sources of information. Ideally the question of exogamy needs to be discussed alongside full data on the marriage choices of successive age-cohorts of Ismailis (and of the groups into which they have married), bearing in mind that exogamy is by no means the only possible form of 'deviant' marriage. Though a number of conclusions can be drawn they must be taken as partial and provisional.

1) There are no overall significant differences between the rates of outmarriage of men and women, showing that the prescription applies

outmarriage of men and women, showing that the proscription applies fairly equally. On the other hand the rate of male outmarriage has dwindled to negligible proportions in the last four years, while for women it has remained comparatively constant.

2) The peak years of exogamy seem to have passed, at least for the moment. In the four years 1963-66 there were 17 cases, while in the next four years there were only six, all of them women. This probably reflects the growth of an Ismaili marriage market in England, through the increasing rate of migration (especially of women), and the greater possibilities for cheap travel to East Africa (bride-finding trips thither not being uncommon).

3) Two cases involve Asian spouses not of East African origin. Both of these are second marriages following divorces from Ismaili spouses, (they concern Munira D's sister, Kathun, and Sadru A's 'uncle', Shiraz). Three other cases involve Ismaili women and non-Ismaili East African Asians. The query marks in the column for husband's occupation reflect the extent to which these girls are lost to the community (one of them became a Roman Catholic).

4) As will have been gathered from the text, there are often close kin relationships between those who have married out. Thus the table includes two of Munira D's three sisters (and might have included one of her four brothers - married to a Swiss - had they not resided in the Congo); one of Amir B's two sisters, the other being married to an Italian in Nairobi; three first cousins, two of whom were brought up in the same household practically as brothers; one woman whose sister's marriage to a Panjabi in East Africa has now ended in divorce; and an aunt and niece of similar age.

5) Only two of the twelve men marrying out have married English girls. (one of these marriages having been kept secret for nearly five years). If this suggests anything, it must be that these men have on the whole married out of the community but not into any English kin group; the girls they have married were themselves strangers in Britain. Only one of them has

Intermarriage

Year	No. of intermarriages Men	Women	Total	Nationalities of spouses	Occupation of husband
Before 1960	2	-	2	*French *Finnish	Manager 'Import/Export'
1960	-	1	1	Canadian	Salesman
1961	-	-	-		
1962	-	-	-		
1963	2	1	3	*Parsee *Italian English	'Import/Export' Optician Engineer
1964	1	3	4	*Irish Sikh (East African) English English	Civil servant ? Insurance broker Journalist
1965	4	2	6	*English *English *Brazilian *Swiss English Hindu Panjabi (East African)	Barrister Engineer Hotelier Insurance broker Spice merchant ?
1966	3	1	4	*Austrian *German *French Ceylonese	Civil Engineer Estate agent Accountant Civil engineer
1967	-	2	2	Goan (East African) English	? Travel agency clerk
1968	-	2	2	English English	University teacher ?
1969	-	-	-		
1970	-	2	2	Italian English	Chef Lecturer
	12	14	26		

* indicates the wife of an Ismaili

adopted his wife's religion, while in all other cases except the Parsee wife, the reverse has occurred. On the other hand, eight of the fourteen women have married English husbands, four of whom have become - at least nominally - Ismaili. A ninth has kin in Britain to be reckoned with. It seems that outmarrying girls find it easier to marry into an immediate kin-universe than do men, which perhaps argues that the absence of potential affines encourages a man to marry more than it does a woman (or perhaps just that everyone prefers a daughter-in-law to a son-in-law). At least it appears more acceptable for a girl to sustain effective relationships with her affines than for a man to do the same. Precisely why this should be is difficult to establish, especially in view of the overall similarity of male and female rates of outmarriage. Ismailis themselves say that 'continental' girls fit better into Ismaili families, especially where they are from the Catholic south. It certainly does seem possible that the tense role of daughter-in-law in an Ismaili family does require experience of kin relationships uncommon in the English middle classes. But the numbers involved are so small that no extended discussion is warranted.

6) Exogamy is not a <u>disqualification</u> from holding community office. Two members of the present council have done so, though both are especially eligible in other ways, one because of his intimate connection with the imam's family, the other because of his aristocratic East African background. On the other hand it would be difficult to imagine that even a man who had made his wife Ismaili could hold community office as an official of the mosque, for his wife would be required to preside over the women's section of the jamat.

7) There is little difference in the kind of family from which the men and the women who have married come. Predominantly they are from the ranks of businessmen and small property-owners, and not the children of working-class Ismailis. This is no surprise, for it was this group which succeeded in combining the maximum of opportunity with the minimum of restraint, being thinly spread through educational institutions across the country at a time

when adults and a fortiori senior kin were few in Britain.

8) It might be supposed that the men who marry out are those for whom the discrepancy between standing they will achieve within the community and their chances outside it is greatest. Without comparing them with a similar group who have married in this is impossible to say. A weakness in the hypothesis would be point 6), there being no necessary contradiction between outmarriage and office-holding and hence status. On the other hand, none of these men has taken his wife home permanently to East Africa. Outmarriage bespeaks a rejection of East Africa, though not necessarily of Ismailism. It is true that most of the men have little to lose by not returning, for expept in one case they do not come from the wealthy, prestigious elite, and it was this man who kept his marriage secret. Despite their stratum of origin the rest have little to attract them back to East Africa. The fathers of four of them are dead; in one case the current family concern was set up by the man's brothers who conceive of their debt to him as discharged by his education at their expense; in another case there are serious family conflicts which surround the shop; that no information is available about three others suggests that their families count for little; one man comes from a working family; and one whose father runs a thriving concern himself runs an even more thriving concern in Scandinavia. Some of them are in addition trained in professions which do not particularly fit them for a business career.

The marriages of the present Aga Khan, his father (Aly Khan) and grandfather (Aga Khan Sultan Mohamed Shah) can have influenced Ismailis only marginally in determining the acceptability of exogamy, for Jupiter is not necessarily to be followed in these things. If outmarriage is common and conceivable, it is still incorrect. Marriage into other Asian communities is heavily discouraged, and with Africans does not occur. It might be suggested that because marriage to a European involves only an individual it becomes possible. The real wealth of the community cannot drain away through exogamy, for it resides in education and community

property. Because the Ismailis have transcended the family level of organisation they can accept threats to the integrity of the family as an Ismaili organisation.

Ismailis who have married out are not social isolates whose action alienates them from the community. Their careers in the community are limited by their marriages, but their prestige is not necessarily damaged. Indeed, it may be enhanced, depending on what estimate can be formed of the family of the non-Ismaili spouse. Such estimates usually revolve around property, but other factors may come into play, for example education. 'Mabel comes from a very good family' might be said of such a spouse, so introducing criteria of excellence which go beyond what is usual in Britain (and which might well pique Mabel a little if personality was all that mattered to her). Even if this vetting has positive results, however, the facts serve not so much to establish claims to community influence or office or position as to community status. The nature of an alliance made outside the community determines standing inside it as much as marriage to another Ismaili would, except that the status is vaguely defined because the relevant family is not directly comparable with Ismaili families; but that standing is not easily converted into office.

Ismailis who marry out cannot be treated as somehow separate from their agemates who do not. Their marriage decisions represent in dramatic form the alternatives for all Ismailis. If they marry non-Ismailis it merely shows how Ismailis' criteria of eligibility are not community-bound, and vice versa. In England the upper-middle stratum of the community has produced a number of outmarriages perhaps partly because the penalties appear irrelevant, or the compensations at least sufficient. From the level of the community as a whole, the norm of endogamy buttresses a substitute for territory in that it defines the group in which the effective division of labour can be made, among whom the system can work. It is not a matter of recruitment to a property-holding group, but to a co-operating group with its own economy and administration. This system, as I have argued, depends on the symbiosis of class-fractions, requiring that the underclass accord

the only available legitimacy and prestige to the upper strata. Inter-marriage signifies that the individual Ismaili concerned has moved beyond these considerations. By it he shows that he participates in another hierarchy. His pursuit of strange gods destroys the exclusiveness of the Ismaili order; it represents an ability to estimate and hence to aspire in what ever world he has married into. He thus moves a little beyond the reach of the call to Ismaili duty. In a batsman's world he has become an allrounder, and one can no longer trust him to stand or fall by his runs rather than his wickets.

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East African Ismailism is more than the sum of its constitutive families;it has, that is to say, developed something akin to a state, though not one with the sanction of force at its disposal. Yet the family is a unit of evaluation in the status hierarchy. A man can improve the status of his family by becoming a hero of the Ismaili ethic, just as he can reduce it by the reverse. Clearly it is possible for offspring to pull in opposite directions, and because it was at one time common for, say, only the youngest brother to be sent away to learn a p ofession while his seniors financed him in the family concern this sometimes arises in acute form. One result is that family feuds and jealousies are sometimes the form which is taken by a kind of class conflict. Despite these aberrations, however, there is in the main a fairly well-recognised system of family evaluation. The depth of lineage calculated as a family reflects this in that there is an understandable tendency to count back to the most prestigious ancestor one can find.[1] One should not be content with that, though, for names and reputations have a tendency to dwindle. By community service, by wealth, by the education of one's children and by the marriages they make one

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1. The surname system supports this, for one usually takes one's father's first name as a surname unless grandfather was much more notable. Even great grandfathers can nominally survive.

seeks to preserve and if possible enhance the standing of one's family. Competition is built into the system, and really the keystone of the arch of success is capital accumulation. With it one can achieve the other virtues; without it the other virtues would count for little. The senior positions demand affluence directly, the others are only theoretical possibilities without it. But in Britain the context from which these aspirations took their meaning is radically changed. The community bureaucracy is no longer the powerful institution it was and, as we shall see in chapter 9, its prestige is scarcely of the same order. Following a survey of the formal institutions of the community in the next chapter it should be possible to clarify the question of the penetration of class into British Ismailism; though perhaps better to say the question of the stripping of the community to its underlying class basis, indicated most of all by the selective weighting of kinship ties.

Chapter 9

THE COUNCIL

Nothing comparable to the intricate hierarchy of Ismaili councils in East Africa has been developed in Britain. Since 1954 there has been a council based on the London jamat, and there still is one, but the council does not now seem to reflect so accurately the jamat as it did in its early days. In what follows I shall sketch out the genesis of the present relationship between the council and the jamat, linking it with the crystallisation of policy decisions from the imamate which are of current importance to the community as a whole. I shall then illustrate the issues in the light of the question of building a new mosque.

Origins

In the early 1950s the focus of the Ismaili community in London was the jamatkhana which a private individual had set up in his house in Lyndhurst Gardens. It must have been something like the present Chatham mosque, except that it served predominantly a transient, scattered jamat. In 1954 this arrangement gave way to the first community-owned mosque (in Kensington Court), and at the same time the council was instituted. Until 1964 its presidents all served two-year terms, and all were students either of law, medicine or dentistry. It will be remembered from chapter 6 that these were broadly the years when the London jamat reached the zenith of its prestige, when the Ismailis in London were either the children of the more forward-looking, wealthy families in EastAfrica, or else sections of those families. The council presidents represented the jamat. They were students of professions not only learned but expensively learned. Though Ismaili concepts of organisation do not include the idea of primus inter pares, these presidents were both primi (organisationally) and socially inter pares.

The end of this era came in about the early 60s. In the mosque itself the growing sense of social differentiation was reflected in the

introduction of pāt, the low daises flanking that behind which the mukhi sits, reserved to mark out the community notables - title-holders as well as officers of the council. The last of the student presidents was appointed in 1962. His father was a millionaire businessman, chairman of the Supreme Council, a director of Jubilee Insurance and also of Diamond Investment Trust and had been knighted for wartime services. He himself was a bar student. He was the swansong of the early conception of the London jamat, for the dominance of the children of the East African wealthy was being already steadily undermined, by the changes detailed in chapter 6.

All but one of the then central figures in the official organisations have since disappeared from London. They were students preparing themselves either for professions or places in family concerns in East Africa. The exception is Mr. T. Mr. T. had been at one time valet to Prince Aly Khan. When the mosque moved to Palace Gate (in 1957), Mr. T became its manager, a post which involved the supervision of its role as a hostel. Since then he has been ex-officio member of the council. Thus the jamat had a permanent paid official to carry out the bread-and-butter tasks attendant on maintaining its 'cultural centre' and mosque. It is not entirely clear what was left to the council. Probably they were concerned mostly with arranging social functions - dances[1] and debates; in short with the social side of community life. Of course the council must have been responsible for the finances of the jamat, just as the mukhi and kamadia would be responsible for the various tithes collected in the mosque.

The present president of the council was appointed in 1964. It is not only in the length of his tenure that he differs from his predecessors.

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1. There used to be an annual Jubilee Ball, held at the Savoy, and attended by the Aga Khan, the elite of the community from all over the world and various dignitaries of state from Britain. People used to time visits to London from East Africa to coincide with these occasions, the last of which, interestingly enough, was held in 1960.

Mr. S comes from a minor East African family, in the sense that they have not produced holders of senior offices. They are not 'known'. Mr. S himself trained as an ophthalmic optician. He now manages a branch of Dolland and Aitchison. He is married, with two children, and lives in a semi-detached house in Hendon. Mr. S is thus, unlike the previous presidents, who were students of the professions destined to return to East Africa, a practising professional man, settled in Britain with every appearance of permanence. In this he is representative of the present council, which is no longer composed of the somewhat dilettante element which characterised it in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Members of the council, 1970

President - Mr. S

Secretaries -

1. Mohamed K. In his early twenties, unmarried and living in a hostel. Writing a Ph.D. thesis (low temperature physics) at Imperial College. Fully intends to return to East Africa (where the Swedish government has set up suitable research facilities).

2. Of similar age, and also unmarried. A working student of banking.

Mukhi - Previously kamadia, and hence a member of the council since 1968. About 30 years old, married with one child. Lives in Putney. Comes from South Africa. 'Working'.

Kamadia - a grocer from India. Married with two children.

Ex-officio member - Mr. T

Lady member - the widow of a rich East African notable, now living in Earls Court. Her children are all married.

Other members -

1 Former mukhi. Although married with two children (living in Wimbledon), and aged about 38, he is an accountancy student.

2 Also a working accountancy student.

3. A recently qualified accountant, newly married. Friendly with the As of the last chapter. Lives in Wimbledon.

4. The only son of an extremely eminent East African family. He qualified as a barrister, and recently has been transferring to the other branch of the profession, along with Farida A. His wife is English; they have a daughter and live in Wimbledon.

The members of any council in London are unlikely to be as well known as their counterparts in an East African town if only because Ismailis from one settlement may well not know the small print who's who of another settlement, let alone another territory. With Ismailis in London being drawn from the three East African countries it would need a council composed only of members of a few pre-eminent families for their names to mean much to the majority of the jamat. In the case of the personnel under discussion, only two or three would be known at all beyond their kin and the people from their own towns in East Africa. The two from India and South Africa are, apart from their present offices, almost completely unknown to most London Ismailis. Mr. T, the warden of Palace Gate, though known to many, remains unknown to all, in that his personal history is something of a mystery.[1] It is 'believed' that he comes from India. His wife is French, his antecedents obscure. Mr. T gathers information with greater freedom than he dispenses it.

It might therefore have been a difficult task to arrange a council of people well-known in the London jamat. Had one been attempting to do so, it might have been better to eliminate the unmarried (three members of the council), those who have married out (two members) and those from the communities which have contributed little to the migration to London (in this case, South Africa and India). On the other hand one would have sought to include someone from Nairobi and, indeed, to have changed the proportion whereby four members come from small towns in Uganda and only three from the whole of Tanzania and Kenya.

In the kind of East African setting for which the Ismaili council system was developed, there were multiple links between Ismailis. They

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1. 'Aly's Ismaili servant, whom he called "Tutti" although his name was believed to be Hussein' (Frischauer, p. 153): he is usually known still as 'Mr. Tutti'.

were of the same jamat, frequently kin to one another; they did business together, were one another's customers or clients, even each other's employer or employee; they might belong to the same mandli, and they encountered one another at the drive-in cinema, in the street or (if they came from Mombasa) at Lighthouse. Except that they are of the same jamat, none of this is so much the case in London. Some of it is entirely inapplicable. This applies to the council as much as to other Ismailis. Any council would thus tend to be relatively mysterious to the bulk of the London community. The present one is more so than necessary. Its composition exacerbates its inevitable isolation.

The last chapter indicated the lack of multiplex relationships among Ismailis in London. It was suggested that there were various social milieux, more or less discrete, in which they found themselves, and that little contact or intercommunication took place across their boundaries. It was implied that these milieux were increasingly class-determined, and that the result was that Ismailis were finding themselves more a part of their (British) social class than of their community, though subject to inhibiting factors related to connections with kin still in East Africa. Yet it is also true that in East Africa Ismailis stretch across a broad social spectrum. Although there is a tendency for separate jamats to form around different mosques in the same town, and for these jamats to be socially distinct (for example, the Makupa and Tudor jamatkhanas in Mombasa), Ismailis have nevertheless succeeded on the whole in binding the whole community into a single organisation in which all had a stake. In achieving this the activities of the 'public' institutions of the community were of crucial importance. Is it possible that the London council might prove able to halt if not reverse the fragmentation of their 'constituency'? Could they, through the use of the money and powers at their disposal, promote conditions under which an Ismaili settlement was a collective undertaking to which all might contribute and from which all might benefit?

What are the council's activities? Unlike an East African provincial council, there are 'no portfolios'. The council divides its own labour, so that there is no representation from other administrative organisations written into their constitution. (In East Africa, it will be remembered, each provincial council includes a representative from each of the Education Department, the Health Department and the Ismailia Association.) Nor are the topics for which other members must accept responsibility handed down from above. (East African councils have four members charged specifically with responsibility for economic welfare, social welfare, youth organisations and women's organisations.) The London council is therefore free to make its own dispositions of time and energy to various aspects of community life. This it has done, and its division of labour is as follows:

1 President
2 Secretaries (two members)
3 Mukhi
4 Kamadia
5 Palace Gate (Mr. T)
6 Youth association (two members)
7 Library
8 Lady member
9 Ex-mukhi

It will be noticed that the main absentees in this list, as compared with an East African provincial council, are members concerned with education, health, doctrine (Ismailia Association), economic welfare, social welfare and women's organisations (a 'lady member' is not the same thing, especially where there are no women's organisations). On the other hand two members devote themselves to the youth association, and one to the library. There is a lady member, the ex-mukhi retains his seat on the council, and ex-officio Mr. T is a permanent presence. In terms of its formal structure, then, the council of the London jamat differs markedly from that of an ordinary provincial council in East Africa.

It should not be inferred from this that the London council is uninterested in education, health, doctrine, economic and social welfare and women. In the case of the first two, the absence of portfolios merely re[illegible] the absence of [illegible] [illegible].[1]

reflects the absence of community schools and hospitals.[1] There is - as yet - no Ismailia association in Britain, and hence no organisation primarily concerned with Ismailism as a doctrine and as a developing historical phenomenon. In order to appreciate the significance of the other absences it is necessary to recall the functions served by the relevant members of an East African council. The member for economic welfare heads a committee of non-councillors. This committee is concerned not only with finding jobs, but also with assessing investment potential. It gathers information on jobs available in Ismaili firms, publicising them in the jamat, even to the extent of arranging for announcements to be made in the mosque. It thus mediates between the local Ismaili labour market and the Ismaili-controlled job market. At the same time it keeps an eye on investment opportunities, so that, for example, it might put in hand a study of the services required in neighbouring towns - various kinds of shops, restaurants, hotel facilities, hairdressing, etc. Because it can study these matters as a whole it can hope to take advantage of situations in such a way that one investment complements others, with mutually beneficial results. The social welfare committee, a parallel structure, concerns itself with the relief of hardship among Ismailis whether arising through age, unemployment, sickness or other reverses of fortune. It is mainly concerned that such situations will not result in hunger, the loss of homes and especially hardship to children. It provides, for example, a meals on wheels service. There are a number of 'women's organisations' in most provinces which are concerned on the whole with domestic competence. I have to hand, for example, a small compilation of recipes published by the Mbarara Ismaili women's association

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1. There is an Ismaili doctor who makes himself available at the mosque at certain times, not for direct consultation, but for information on where to go or whom to see for the best advice. For this he charges a fee. He is also available to Ismailis coming from East Africa for treatment in this country.

(in Gujarati, with hilarious transliterations of English culinary items). There are talks on child-rearing, hygiene and other matters of domestic concern. Some of these associations organise annual baby shows, with special prizes endowed by the imamate itself[1] in order to encourage high standards of child care.

In London the council cannot hope to emulate these functions. Although there is an Ismaili labour market, there is no corresponding job market to marry it with. The most the council can do is to advise newcomers on where to get the kind of information they could have got direct from the community in East Africa. They can point to the existence of employment exchanges, the various private agencies and the newspaper advertisements. But in East Africa the economic welfare committee itself would discharge some of the functions of a specialised private employment agency. It would have a list of vacancies to hand. Then there seems to be no question of co-ordinating investment. It is true that East African Ismailis have acquired large investments in this country over the last few years, mostly in the property field. The council has no especial

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1. According to a first-hand newspaper account of a visit by the Aga Khan to Pakistan in 1969, the imam showed himself very concerned with such things: 'Au hasard, il entre dans un des petits immeubles d'apparence confortable. Déjà sa présence a été signalée. En un instant, sortis des blocs, les hommes courent de tous les côtés, les pans de leurs longs pyjamas tombant jusqu'aux genoux. Karim avise une porte ouverte. Il entre. A l'intérieur, une femme en sari le regarde, ébahie. Il pénètre dans une autre pièce où règne la pénombre. Quatre enfants dorment à même le sol, sur un vieux tapis effrangé. Karim ressort, sur la pointe des pieds, suivi de la mère toute tremblante. Elle sait qu'elle est en faute.

"J'ai dit que les enfants ne doivent pas dormir par terre. Ils peuvent attraper toutes sortes de maladies. Il faut suivre mes instructions. Je ne suis pas content du tout."' (France Soir, 30.10.1969).

Instructions such as the one referred to may go into considerable detail. Thus one of the present Aga Khan's earliest firmans - 'Children who are under ten years old should have said their prayers and be asleep by half past seven, whenever possible. I know that this will sometimes create difficulties for the mothers, but you should do your utmost to overcome this. If your children are tired when they reach school the next morning they cannot possibly do their work properly and, more than this you endanger both their health and their growth. The mothers who go to Jamat-khana at night should see that their children are in bed before they leave.'

expertise in this. When Farida A's brother wanted to buy a house in London, he took the advice of Sadru A's estate agent and of Shiraz. When Aziz C took a mortgage on a house (a GLC mortgage) he found it through a local estate agent (although he knows an Ismaili estate agent), as had his father-in-law a few months previously. In any case, the councillors are not themselves men of much property. Nor are they businessmen. Even if they were it is highly doubtful whether they could have given much advice, say, to Akbar CR about where to invest his spare few hundred (though someone might have remembered that you can't get Radio One in the Congo).

It is extremely difficult to assess the extent of financial and social hardship among Ismailis in Britain. Probably the point has been reached where few come to Britain without making proper arrangements with kin beforehand. Immigration restrictions have partly ensured this. The age structure of the community is skewed heavily towards the young, as with most immigrations, so that some problems of age and infirmity are minimised. There must, of course, be transitional difficulties for new arrivals, but once they are housed and employed they become entitled to normal social security benefits and the solaces of the National Health Service. It does happen that Ismailis suddenly without accommodation get in touch with Mr.S, as president of the council, who then exerts himself to help them. That this task falls to the president, rather than devolving on some specified member of his council suggests the infrequency with which such matters arise. The lady member of the council is also active in this field, for there are families distressed by bereavement, strife, divorce, etc., whom it is possible to tend. But there are no women's organisations on the East African model. If there were they might find themselves in competition with the health service ante- and post-natal care facilities as well as with the family-planning clinics, in which case they would be in competition with institutions than which they would find it difficult to be more progressive. Again, in East Africa there are official committees of ladies dedicated to eradicating spinsterhood and bachelorhood; but there is no marriage committee in London, probably (in view of the extent of outmarriage)

for overriding policy reasons.

The London council appears increasingly as an ad hoc problem-solving agency, supremely pragmatic. One of its members mentioned that he had spent his previous weekend on a typical situation (this was Mohamed K, one of the two secretaries). An Ismaili student approached him with an immediate difficulty. He had just heard that his father and mother had been severely injured in a road accident in Uganda. The dying man (as it turned out) was asking to see his son in England. The son's passport was being renewed by the Ugandan High Commission. If he travelled he risked deportation from Kampala. Mohamed K knew it was useless to approach anyone at the Uganda High Commission on a Saturday afternoon, and so bent his efforts to ensuring that the student would be allowed back into Britain if things went ill at Kampala airport. He was able to secure no guarantees, but succeeded in persuading the authorities at Heathrow to keep a written note of the facts to which the young man might refer on his return.

There remain the roles of the members of the London council who are concerned with the youth association and library. The library is a very small matter, comprising some hundreds of volumes. There are religious works, such as 'Noorum-Mubin', Islamic texts, compilations of ginans and firmans and some of the commentaries of the Ismailia Association of Pakistan. The content of the library is thus uncontroversial, its budget small and its readership limited. The youth association is another matter. Its activities are described as 'recreational and literary'. It is run by a committee consisting of six members including the two liaison members of the council. In mid-1970 it had lost its president, who had returned to East Africa, and was headed by a temporary chairman. It busies itself organising dances, debates and coach outings (for example to seaside resorts at bank holidays). Some of the organisational side of the council's activities invite comparison with the social side of a small students' union at, say, a teacher training college in the early 1950s, and the youth association approximates closest to this. Recently, as an addition to

its other activities, an Ismaili Accountants Association has been affiliated to it. This is an innovation so recent that its ambitious programme of lectures on technical subjects has yet to prove its appeal. It does appear to be attempting a duplication of courses available in the institutes which working Ismaili accountancy students must anyway attend, but it also offers an employment advisory service, so that anyone leaving a position on the completion of his course can publicise it among fellow Ismailis who might be interested.

The youth association used to include a sports club. Its genesis and demise are of some interest. Its main concern was with running a soccer team and a snooker club. At the time when it was affiliated to the youth association, the sports club played in a West London Saturday league. It had no ground of its own, but was able to get the use of various grounds. Its fixtures were sufficiently local for it not to require much in the way of transport, its expenses kit and the hire of grounds. In the summer it broke up, leaving a central caucus who played snooker regularly together. The council and sports club eventually parted company. The council says the reasons were the transience of organisers, the English weather, the lack of facilities and the fact that there were other, non-community facilities available. This was sufficient ground for them to abandon the sports club to its fate. All this took place some three years ago now, so that memories might be dimmed, but if the council wished to promote sports one would have thought it might have continued the relationship on some basis. In fact whatever ~~the~~ financial support the footballers derived from the youth association proved dispensable, for the same people still regularly play soccer together. The team captain recalls that it was the players who broke away from the youth association, mainly because of increasing insistence on bureaucratic procedures, especially in its accounting methods. Since then the football team has become self-financing, raising the necessary funds through annual dances (for which a church hall was hired) and occasional music parties. The

only real loss they sustained was that of the right to call themselves the 'Aga Khan Football Club', instead of which they refer to themselves as the 'Ismaili FC'.[1] They have dropped out of the Saturday league, but still play more or less every Saturday.

This situation should be compared with the way East African councils exercise a tight control over sport through the agency of youth associations. There will be 'Aga Khan' teams in most sports where a league exists, and excellent facilities. Clearly this is not possible in Britain, where the community is not rich, where land is expensive and where many young Ismailis enjoy facilities in their colleges. But the footballers are not in fact students of this kind. Some of them are working students, another is a bank clerk; none is in full time higher education, and none is married. Although he lives not far from Kensington, the team captain says he never goes to Palace Gate; it is far too 'showy'; if he felt he could go after work 'in a shirt' and not arouse comment, he would go. He says that in this he does not reflect the rest of the team, but he certainly does correspond with his flatmates (one of whom last went to Palace Gate over 10 years ago) and with another of his friends.[2]

In the youth association, there can be discerned a pattern of acceptance and rejection. The accepted activities, dances, debates, outings and the accountants association, tend to emphasise the conception of young Ismailis in London as full-time students, or at least to assume it as the mode. It seems to have neglected activities to the extent that it can claim that they are performed in colleges. As a result those who

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1. The team all seem to be ardent followers of Manchester United. They say this dates from before they came to Britain (probably from the time of the 1956 Munich disaster). They have two sets of jerseys, one magenta and green (the colours of the Aga Khan), and the other red (the colour of Manchester United). The team avoids fixtures when United are in London.

2. For example Aziz C's guests at his cards party (see chapter 8), some of whom played with the football team. Their attitude to the community indicates the distance between the council and at least this group in regard to matters more central to Ismailism than the organisation of a soccer team.

are not attached to some such institution find the youth association of little relevance, even a hindrance.

The formal side of the council's activities thus appear to centre on ad hoc responses to distress among Ismailis, and the maintenance of a limited youth organisation. The full range of its interests are difficult to discover, however, and may go wider than this. The difficulty arises from the council's addiction to secrecy. In contrast with East Africa, where serious inquiry elicits, in my experience, thorough and helpful responses, the London council is extremely difficult to approach. Though vague on facts and figures, East African councillors seem understandably keen to publicise as much as possible the details of the organisation they help administer. Of course they are secure in the knowledge that their system is impressive and modernising, and that the community need defer to none in its collective achievement. In London, on the other hand, the council is extremely evasive. Perhaps I was clumsy in my approaches, though there seemed to be a definite reluctance to dispense information of any kind about the council's activities. Ismaili intermediaries of all kinds experienced the same fate. The president himself remained strictly unavailable, except by telephone, admitting to no free evenings, free lunchtimes or free moments. The exigencies of duty made it impossible for him to commit himself to any future time near or distant. Given this, all that remained was a system of mandatory reference by all other officials to the president for security to be totally effective. In explanation it was said that at the time of the marriage of the Aga Khan (in Paris in October 1969), there had been an unauthorised press release, purporting to emanate from representatives of the community in England, and that it had since been ordered by the Aga Khan that 'all publicity' should be handled by the president.[1] Eventually I succeeded in arranging

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1. At the same time, even East African councillors are security conscious; there the practical expression of this is an extreme suspicion of any theological or philosophical speculation, and groups constituted for this purpose have on occasion been suppressed. Only the strictest orthodoxy can hope to gain the community imprimatur, for Ismailis always express the need

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to meet Mohamed K. Had the subject of my curiosity been in the field of solid state physics I need have gone no further. Equally, the niceties of theology occupied us much. My acquaintanceship with these branches of knowledge profited a great deal. It was only by degrees that much conerning the council emerged.

Thus, if I have given the impression that the council is a do-nothing body, this might be a misconception arising from its reticence in self publicity. On the other hand, the council's apparent reluctance to reveal its business might merely arise from a mistaken belief on his part that there was business to reveal. A third explanation which could also be part of the truth would be that the members of the council were in fact very busy, but that they were conscious that there was little to show for their efforts, at least by comparison with their East African counterparts. It should also be borne in mind that London councillors all have a full range of private commitments. Whereas an East African council president, even at the provincial level, is typically a businessman able to entrust his enterprise to kinsmen while he gives much of his time to public duty, Mr S manages a concern for a large firm unlikely to be moved by his commitment to his community; he complains of the weight of this double burden, but affirms his willingness to bear it and the personal satisfaction it gives him. Mohamed K himself, though as active as possible on the council's behalf, finds that he is severely limited by the demands of his research project.

The main differences, then, between the council in London and an East African provincial council concerns the position of the councillors and the organisation of services. The councillors are, first, relatively remote from the members of the jamat because of the geographical diversity

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contd. to present an appearance of unity to outsiders. An example of the kind of writings which gain the community's blessing may be found in Africa Ismaili's 1970 'Imamat Annual'. Naturally in private Ismailis are willing to unbridle their opinions to a greater extent.

of origins, the absence of multiplex relationships, the demands of their occupations, and perhaps through the self-imposed secrecy in which their operations are shrouded; and, second, relatively lacking in prestige, since they do not overreach the major part of the jamat in economic independence, or a large part of it in education, and because in the main the reputation of their families of origin in East Africa is neither superior nor wide (the exception being the last-named in the list of councillors given above). The services which the council is able to offer the jamat are minimal. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the facilities available at Pala e Gate. The council is unable to wield any special influence in the fields of job-finding, education, health or welfare. It can call on no authoritative doctrinal guidance. There is no tribunal. It runs a youth association whose main objects are 'literary and recreational', but whose sports club has disaffiliated itself. The council can, therefore, be described as a pale parody of its East African counterparts.

These remarks should by no means be taken to mean that the council is weak and without policy. It could be argued that its present state is precisely the result of conscious policy rigorously applied. Throughout the present discussion the role of the imamate has been neglected. Yet it is the Aga Khan who appoints and supervises the work of his council in London just as he does in East Africa. How is it, then, that the London community has been allowed to develop with a leadership so apparently weak? One possible hypothesis must be seen in the context of worldwide Ismailism, and the aspirations of the imamate for it. Though what is suggested below is outrageous, it has a certain logic which must be examined.

Relations between the imam and his London jamat may be described as strained. Ismailis say that he is aggry with 'London', that he disapproves of the way people behave here, and so on. Concretely, the frequency of his visits to the jamat (as opposed to the number of his private visits to London) has diminished, especially over the past five years. This has

culminated in the events following his marriage. It was announced that he would take the new Begum to the centres of Ismailism to introduce her to his followers. After a year London has not so far been included. Ismailis feel somewhat piqued by this, and take it as a mark of their imam's displeasure with them.

Ever since it became a serious possibility the imamate has thrown its weight against the idea of largescale, permanent settlement in Britain. It is a comment on the political subtlety of the imam that there has never been pronounced an outright ban on migration to Britain, for there would have been an only too obvious disobedience. Instead, obstacles have been strewn in the path of the growth of such a tendency. The first major step was the advice to opt for East African citizenship after independence. It is impossible to estimate the extent to which Ismailis did this, though it is always said that a far larger proportion of them than of other Asians in East Africa are now nationals. Some give estimates as high as 90 per cent., but this must be dubious. Some families, like that of Mr. CR, took British citizenship except for children who were entitled to automatic local citizenship. In others it seems to have been thought wise for the wife to become British, so that Amir B's mother is British while his father is a Kenya citizen. The same is true of Farida A's parents, though her mother's British passport has since been devalued. At the time, by agreement with the government, much of the necessary administrative work was done through the council, so that many of the poorer Ismailis found that they had registered en masse as local citizens.[1] This has been followed up by consistent direct advice to gatherings and individuals to return home from Britain as soon as their studies were complete. Akbar CR, for example, was asked by the Aga Khan about his intentions when the imam came to London in the mid-60s. Akbar said he was learning advertising display at night classes, and reports that he was advised to learn all he could and then return to East Africa. But it was already too late, for the

1. It is said that the majority of leading Ismailis took British citizenship nonetheless, arguing that the Aga Khan advised, rather than ordered his followers t o become local citizens. This may be so, though such men might have found little difficulty in entering Britain where they had sufficient

family had British passports and their East African prospects were contracting.

The reasons for this policy may be divided into the disadvantages of an emigration from East Africa, and the disadvantages of an immigration into Britain. It appears that the Aga Khan holds that the best counter to political insecurity and social opprobrium in East Africa is to push his followers into the modern sector of the economy. This is clearly the logic of Industrial Promotion Services (see part I). According to a newspaper report, the Aga Khan -

> 'commissioned from a firm of industrial consultants a report - its recommendations have mostly been carried out - on the economic structure of the Ismaili communities in East Africa so that he might forestall or attempt to forestall racial tension between African and Asian after uhuru by making each community as far as possible an integral part of the newly independent nation.' (Weekend Telegraph, 8.9.1967).

This might mean a policy of conceding a stake in existing organisations to non-Ismailis, as was reluctantly done in the case of Diamond Investment Trust, but is more likely to refer to the initiation of enterprises in the secondary sector through IPS, in partnership with non-Ismaili capital and certainly making use of non-Ismaili labour. But a strategy such as this requires both capital and knowhow. Political instability in East Africa means a flight of capital, Ismaili as much as any other, and this has happened on a wide scale. An organisation like IPS could perhaps break the vicious circle of lack of confidence-flight of capital-low investment-lack of confidence,[1] thus initiating the virtuous circle of investment -

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contd. investment here.

1. This argument applies to local capital more than to foreign, since foreign capital is subject to political guarantees. See, for example, Meister (1966): 'Prise entre le grand commerce d'export-import, dirigé de Londres et que ses dimensions internationales rendent invulnérable à une nationalisation éventuelle du commerce extérieur, et la classe montante et politiquement très remuante des petits commerçants de détail africain, la colonie asiatique lutte politiquement pour sauvegarder ses positions, exporte le plus possible ses capitaux disponibles, s'unit davantage pour contrer d'éventuels pogromes.' (pp. 21-2).

confidence - retention of capital - low incentive to migrate - confidence. Knowhow is unfortunately the Achilles heel of the argument, for it involves an educational policy which cannot be pursued entirely in East Africa. It means that if Ismailis are going to play an important part in industrial development they must go abroad to the developed countries for their training. One can therefore appreciate the dilemma of the imamate. In this respect it is not only higher education which has caught his attention:-

> 'My own Ismaili community has set up numerous nursery, primary, and secondary schools all over East Africa. We would certainly welcome any initiative by the governments to modernise still further the syllabuses for these schools so that we can contribute to the flow of technological experts which are so desperately needed.'[1]

Thus, given the initial assumption that the Ismaili community in East Africa was going to remain in existence for the foreseeable future and that there was no possibility of uprooting the whole mass along with accumulated capital, it became important to ensure that many young Ismailis were educated abroad. Nonetheless in 1970 it was decided that no more community bursaries were to be granted for study abroad, and that the Aga Khan foundation for postgraduate studies was to be closed for three years. No doubt this partly reflects the widening of educational opportunities in East Africa at the post-school level, but quite clearly its effect, whether intentional or otherwise, is to reduce the loss of educated young Ismailis to Britain.

Permanent settlement in Britain is a direct contradiction of this strategy. Most of the young Ismailis mentioned in the last chapter had acquired some kind of skill or training in Britain, and that at the expense of Ismaili capital (whether community capital or private resources, which last are a drain on the sources of community capital). Furthermore, their

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1. Daily Nation (East Africa), Special Souvenir Edition, H.H. the Aga Khan in East Africa, 1966, p. 23.

presence here facilitated property investment in this country, a trend which leads towards the vicious circle mentioned above. The 'brain drain' and the capital drain go hand in hand and mutually reinforce one another. The existence of a migration to Britain may therefore be seen as damaging to the economic, social and political prospects of Ismailis remaining in East Africa.[1] This in itself would be sufficient ground for the imamate to stem the flow.

However, it is possible that the disadvantages of immigration are seen as at least as great as the disadvantages of emigration from East Africa. We have already seen that the organisation of the existing jamat in London is weak, and it is being suggested that to an extent this may well be deliberate. But this is true only to an extent, for in Britain the state itself robs the community of much of its raison d'être. In East Africa a premium was placed on the religious side of Ismailism because it provided the sources of an ideology. The system worked because of the ideology, and the ideology flourished because the system worked. The transcendent ability of the imam to elevate and demote, to regulate, supervise and decide were at first a function of his religious charisma. As Ismailis prospered under this regime, so did the ideas which underlay it. Because in England there can be no such organisation, overridden by the state, the devotion to the Aga Khan would come to rest entirely on tradition. At the same time the British environment is unlikely to encourage this tradition. At this stage many young Ismailis are passing through institutions of learning, where they must reconcile themselves with Western thought. Though the only cases (two) of open apostasy follow outmarriage, the grip of the imamate is likely to diminish at the ideological level. Already the concept of the imam has undergone redefinition (though this was much overdue), and the new version of the

1. Mr. Zool Khanbhai, now of Karachi, writing in Africa Ismaili of 'the crying need for vocational guidance' noted that 'the community is spending a substantial amount on education. The investment...must yield its return in the form of productive manpower for the community. How far the investment has been productive for the community, only the statistics of the manpower absorbed in the economic activities can tell...The community with its scant resources cannot afford to mismanage its manpower,' (1970 'Imamat Annual',p.79). The emphasis is on 'the community' as a collective enterprise.

dúa attempts to clarify the question of the divine status of the imam. Meanwhile an Ismaili presence in Britain presents other difficulties. If it occurred on a large scale it might embroil the imamate directly in British politics, for his name would be bound to be mentioned if he had influence over a section of the British immigrant population.[1] If his followers are a wealthy and powerful section of East African society his political standing is correspondingly high. These reasons are similar to those which led the early settlers in Britain to be very criticial of the arrival of an increasing number of undistinguished Ismailis in the 1960s, to whom they referred as 'junglees'. From the imam's point of view the question may have arisen earlier and might account for the end of the annual Jubilee Balls, for by then Ismaili students in London were attending them. Though affluent and westernised by most standards, they might have begun to undermine the imam's Western image. In Britain the Aga Khan is international aristocrat of immense wealth. His world is that of race-courses and antique auctions, as an inspection of 'Jennifer's Diary' in Queen magazine, or the occasional piece in the Evening Standard (the last Aga Khan and the late Lord Beaverbrook were old acquaintances) will show.

In summary then, the neglect of the London Jamat may be seen as an attempt to moderate the flow of Ismaili migrants to Britain, and especially to discourage the students who equip themselves with the means of middle class life in this country from staying on and marrying. In this perspective the evident weaknesses of the council organisation, and indeed of the council itself, come into focus. The absence of any channelling of Ismaili capital in this country into collective enterprise fits in well. But the prime example of the policy concerns the mosque itself. It will be

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1. Would he wish his community council to become officially involved in a distasteful affair such as that of the three young Ismailis claiming to have been wrongfully arrested in Bayswater (The Guardian, 2.11.1970)?

well known by now that Palace Gate is inadequate. The question therefore arises as to the provision of new facilities. This has now been on the agenda for some years and as yet there is no sign of anything materialising. Sources close to the council maintain that the matter is in hand, but that there are difficulties. The council is looking for a site, either to convert a pre-existing structure or else to erect a purpose-built mosque. Quite clearly the most fundamental decisions have yet to be taken. Furthermore there is the question of location, for a centrally placed mosque would minimise inconvenience at the expense of cost. Then the questio of a site would involve considerations of planning and change of use.[1] In this connection the experience of Mr. B is instructive. In conversation with the council president, Mr. S, during which he reiterated the dismal inadequacy of Palace Gate, Mr. B learned that a site was under consideration, but that a decision had to be taken within the month. Mr. S was worried about the question of planning permission. Having enquired where the site was, Mr. B casually offered to introduce Mr. S to the borough engineer whom he knew through the Rotary Club. Mr S. agreed. Mr. B was much annoyed some time later to discover the Mr. S had failed to keep the appointment he had arranged with the friendly borough engineer. He says he asked Mr. S what had gone wrong, only to be told that since the site had already been taken by another party there was little point in bothering. Mr. B has pressed the point, only to come up against the defence that le roi le veult, that is that the Aga Khan has instructed otherwise. Indeed Mr. B reached the point of drafting a memorandum to the Aga Khan, but then desisted in view of his 'non grata' status (which, in view of the fact that he is a community grandee settled in England, is hardly surprising.

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1. Though I am advised by a planning consultant that religious worship comes under the least objectionable use class in the legislation, so that such permission might not be difficult to obtain.

He suggested to Mr. S that there should at least be temporary arrangements made, such as the regular hiring of school halls for Fridays. This too, it seems, would be unacceptable to the Aga Khan.

Before returning to the mosque issue, a digression of some importance is justified. Mr. B is one of the few Ismailis in London able to raise a matter like the mosque directly with the president of the council. Even other councillors might find that the matter had been entrusted directly to Mr. S by the Aga Khan. Only because Mr. B has the reputation of being, or having been, close to the imamate, can he overcome this; and his kin network, especially through his wife, is sufficiently impressive to make too great a confidence in his ignorance of policy at least unwise. By allowing Mr. B to discuss the matter with him, and even to make suggestions about how matters might be furthered, Mr. S implicitly accepted that, official position or no, Mr. B was a man to be reckoned with. In fact it may be suggested that the presence of men like Mr. B (and there are only a very few others permanently in London) is a latent threat to the council's authority. Mr. B's affines, and himself and his kin in their time, formed what might be called the 'natural' elite of the East African community. They were wealthy, educated and westernised beyond the reach of men of Mr. S's standing. In this sense, though the London council is legitimated in office by the fiat of the Aga Khan it can never have the full legitimacy of a council of aristocrats and grandees, who dispose moreover, of private resources which make business contacts with them important, so that they can place orders selectively and give credit when they sell. In East Africa high office is the seal on eminence either of family or fortune; in London the imamate makes leaders rather than recognises them. Mr. B himself, despite his experiences, is the last man to criticise or deride the London council. Only when egged on by his wife's nephew did he unhappily agree that there was a question of competence. Other Ismailis, not of Mr. B's standing, have been known to use the expression 'nobodies' of the council, and the feeling that they

are parvenus is not uncommon. When the last-named on the list of councillors above was appointed (in 1970), it was said 'He'll shake them up a bit'. He hasn't (and there is a possibility that he may resign, for reasons which are so far unclear). Mr. B's own son and daughter-in-law, though not especially interested, are rather more hostile. Of one member of the council Rehmet B opined that he was a 'narrow-minded bigot',[1] and who were the others anyway? Other Ismailis, not being so well acquainted with council personnel, tend to misconstrue it in other ways. In the previous chapter, the CRs and Ds knew none of its members by name. The As and Bs had a better idea, though even they were unable to give more than five or six names. Aziz C did know who the president was, but criticised the council for neglecting the needs of settled people such as himself, since it consisted of students who would soon go away. As we have seen, a large part of the council is actually as settled as Aziz C, though his view of its policy is not without foundation.

Meanwhile, there are other aspects of the question of the new mosque which are significant. We have already seen how Ismailis avoid Palace Gate on Fridays where possible, yet give the reason that it is overcrowded. The paradox is resolved by the fact that the mosque can be 'crowded'by a small fraction of London Ismailis, (it can accommodate comfortably no more than 200 people, while there are some 4-5,000 Ismailis in London alone.) The newer arrivals, whose presence at the mosque stimulates criticism (p.77), are representative of different status groups in East Africa, and of

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1. This is a little unfair. The member complained of is undoubtedly what Ismailis call a 'fanatic', (see p. 38) in the sense that he tends to bear witness out of season as well as in it, but he has wrestled with theological difficulties in earnest, for example the status of evolutionary theory. Probably some situation had arisen where the family and connection of Rehmet B (who is not given to this kind of outburst) had produced an over-assertive response from a council member not sharing her background, thus indicating that the tension between social strategies can emerge and be expressed in categories related to intensity of religious belief.

different classes in England. The drift of upper class and professional Ismailis to attendance at Palace Gate on Wednesdays and Sundays is thus a form of temporal social segregation. There is a constant suggestion among such people that instead of a massive new central mosque, it would be more convenient to build a second. As we saw from the geography of British Ismailism, this could well lead to catchments which were socially distinct, in which case a spatial dimension would be added to the incipient temporal form of segregation. As has been mentioned, similar situations have arisen in East Africa, where the Tudor mosque in Mombasa, for example, became (and remains) far more fashionable (to borrow a word used of churches in the nineteenth century) than the Makupa mosque, whose clientele was based largely on the nearby block of community flats. Even Mr. B's suggestion of the hiring of school halls would lead directly to something of this kind, though this was merely an interim proposal. On the other hand, travelling in London and the price of land in the city centre make this a possible solution. But it certainly appears that the council has not yet reached the point of deciding to rule it out.

If this analysis of the situation is correct, the council must operate under strain. It is suggested here that although in name the council has a notional prestige and authority comparable with an East African provincial council, in reality a large part of its task is to moderate the growth of an attractive centre of emigration from East Africa. There are few indications that the council feels frustrated by its position, which, though unenviable, has consolations. In fact it appears that the council operates within the framework of a myth which justifies its activites. This judgment, it must be admitted, is derived from slim sources, mainly Mohamed K. The basic tenet of the myth is that Ismailis in London are transient, and that they are students temporarily abroad intending to return to East Africa. A supplementary tenet would be that if they are not, not only is it not the council's fault, it is their own, for they are here contrary to the manifest wishes of the imamate. A

particularly revealing misconception concerned the Chatham jamat: Mohamed K thought that it was typical of provincial jamats in that it consisted entirely of students! The same was true of his account of the disestablishment of the sports club. Its organisers were not at all transient, its captain-manager having been in Britain for ten years and intending to stay. Mohamed K systematically implied that to be a student was to be only temporarily resident in Britain. It therefore followed that the council should cater for a student presence. It was true that the rate of marriage was high and increasing, but that did not guarantee the couple would take up residence in Britain. When speaking of families, Mohamed K meant those like the CRs who had come from East Africa was a going concern. The rate of settled household formation in this country he had not assessed. Yet the council did challenge its own myths, by attempting a census of the London jamat. Its results are highly classified information, but since the method employed (distributing forms to people in the mosque and asking for their return when completed) was inevitably faulty they are bound to be suspect. In fact none of the settled families mentioned in the last chapter filled in the census form. One of the objects of the census appears to have been the assessment of skilled manpower potential in London, and the possibility that this pool might be tapped in Ismaili enterprise abroad must have been in mind. The council is also interested in minimising the gross number of Ismailis in London, though this is related to the new mosque issue and the question of its acceptability in particular neighbourhoods. Mr.S, for example, was upset to hear from Mr. B that the latter had given me an estimate of 5-6 ,000 as the Ismaili population in London. 'You should have said 3,000', he is reported as saying. The impression must be that members are under illusions to varying degrees, and that Mr. S and almost certainly Mr. T know well what the real situation is.

From the point of view of the imamate, the reassessment of its attitude to the British community is on the agenda. Events in East Africa

have undermined the possibility of firmly establishing the virtuous circle of confidence, stability and investment. The existence of a settled population in London is a reality and apparently a permanent one. If the distinctive life of the community in East Africa were to become untenable either through attacks on race or property, the argument on which opposition to emigration is based would be vitiated. Individual Ismailis are in any case entitled to read the signs for themselves. In this situation to add to the inevitable weakening of community organisation in face of the state a refusal to sanction the provision even of associational facilities could guarantee the regression of Ismailism from a community to a denomination and beyond. On the other hand the decision might have been made that the settled population in Britain must be sacrificed for the benefit of their East African brethren.[1]

The British situation therefore militates against a strong community authority in a number of ways. The pool of available personnel has little by way of independent power, and thus cannot carry the same weight as an East African council. The number of contexts in which councillors might have contact with the jamat are far fewer than in East Africa, where kinship, geography and economic life make for multiplex relationships. Many activities which an East African council might undertake are superseded in Britain by the state. Beyond this, it may well be that the imamate itself would prefer that in London the council should refrain from initiatives which might aid or promote any further settlement here.

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1. A passing observation of Frischauer's is difficult to reconcile with the council's present unhurried pace; in 1969 the Aga Khan is there said to have

> 'approved plans for a building project in central London where a new headquarters - jamatkhana, social centre, shops - for his growing community in Britain would soon be going up' (p.266).

Elsewhere, (p.180) Frischauer, writing of the year 1951, notes of the third Aga Khan that -

> '£20,000 he donated towards a new mosque in London turned out to be a very long term project; by 1970 the mosque had not yet been built'.

Chapter 10

CONCLUSION

The migration of Ismailis from East Africa to Britain which has been described reflects the concrete social, political and economic relations between Britain and East Africa over the period during which it occurred. Once the migration was in progress the links between the migrants and those still in East Africa were part of these general intercontinental relations. More specifically, because Ismailis are not East Africans in general, and the migrants not even Ismailis in general, the migration indicates the role of Britain for the East African owners of commercial and industrial capital, and vice versa. The fact that the decision to settle in Britain is a private one, and, as we have seen, opposed by community policy, also points to a contradictory situation with respect to the interests of the community as a social formation and the interests of its individual members.

At its most fundamental, the economic component of relations between Britain and East Africa is a relationship between an area of high capital intensity and an area of low capital intensity, conversely between an area of relative labour surplus and another of relative labour scarcity. Ignoring a great many important factors, the logical strategy for competitive capital is therefore either the export of capital to the latter, or the import of labour from it. In fact both these movements have materialised, though in the case of Britain the inward flow of labour has been curtailed in recent years. From this point of view a model of a migration might be constructed. Where incoming labour is unsophisticated it will operate in the remaining areas of high labour-intensive production in the metropolis, and overseas investment will have either to employ expatriate experts at high rates or else make use of relatively unskilled local labour; on the whole immigrants to Britain have been concentrated both geographically and

in certain occupations and industries,[1] thus retaining their separateness from the host society and their day-to-day contacts with one another. In this situation mutual surveillance helps support values oriented to the home area; if there is a flow of savings, it will be from the migrants to the home areas, so staking the migrant's claim to repute and a future in that area. The migrant community functions for the home area as a source of income, whether for capital formation or consumption, and thus as source of competitive power, while the home area functions for the migrant as the guardian of the fruits of his labour, both in the sense of the immediate surplus he creates, and also in the sense that it guarantees the system of values to which his current activity and aspirations are ultimately oriented.

Such a model is really an extreme type. It may be approached, but more rarely achieved, for it depends on the maintenance of home area values, and thus a degree of insulation from the values of the host society which is difficult to maintain. In particular it demands a sharp distinction between short-term deprivation and long-term prosperity, and short-term deprivation must be a dominant value of the migrant group. In so far as the symbols of prestige in the migrant community assume the form of consumables, the regime of austerity collapses and the relationship with the home area changes. Where it does exist such a migration operates so as to invest some of the surplus generated in capital-intensive areas in areas of capital scarcity, and in doing so is likely to work through the existing kinship structure, for the kin-group will be the unit inside which capital will be accumulated.

To this extreme type the Ismaili migration conforms not at all. Labour power is imported into the metropolis, but it is not unskilled labour.

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1. Patterson, for example, writes that in Britain, 'Asian workers are most often found in the North and Midlands, in textiles, steel works, some public services and the manufacturing of some engineering and electrical and chemical goods' (p.134), a generalisation which a) may no longer hold and b) certainly does not apply to Ismailis.

Ismailis are not concentrated in any labour-intensive industry, or in any homogeneous geographical location, except in so far as they are in the towns. On the contrary, they have dispersed through a wide range of occupations and are distributed through a great variety of housing zones. If there is a capital flow at all from Britain to East Africa, it is far outweighed by a reverse flow. Ismaili values have not been opposed to those of the host society - in some respects they have been brought as close as possible to convergence. Income consumption is highly valued, and even assumes competitive proportions.

Given that migrations are not arbitrary, random redistributions of population, this raises a number of questions. At one level these concern the rationality of the migrant, at another the logic of the situation which makes his decision to migrate itself a rational one. Furthermore, in the Ismaili case, the individual migrant finds himself in conflict with the policy of the imamate, which suggests that whatever writes migration into the personal agenda of the would-be migrant urges the reverse in one conception of the collective interest. In other words, while some Ismailis interpret their own interests as lying in migration - even some who do not actually migrate - the rationality of their decision is challenged, not on its own level, but at the level of the interests of the community as a whole.

If we look at these interests in terms of markets for resources, the polarity becomes clearer. The main resources of which an individual Ismaili disposes are his capital, large or small; his labour power, sophisticated or otherwise; and his influence, achieved or ascribed, which expresses his degree of monopoly in the market. We have already seen how many have calculated that their market prospects in Britain are better than in East Africa, though this assessment depends on political judgment at least as much as on quantifiable considerations of relative prices. Two major factors involved here are the future education of children in East Africa, it being feared that many will not get places in post-primary schools, and the calculation that, however much one earns at the moment,

a time may come when it will have to be left behind in East Africa. Equally it is necessary to ask how migration affects the various markets in which Ismailis compete for social rewards, that is to say, in the areas in which they cash the results of the returns on their capital, labour and influence. If, as has appeared, the value of great communal eminence is no longer available in Britain (though we have also noted Ismailis whose community-oriented activity seems to relate mainly to the position of their families in East Africa), then the migration implies that community position and prestige is for the migrants, either too expensive or of reduced worth. Settling in Britain means a calculation of the value of resources, but also a decline in the demand for community prestige. It is also noteworthy that Ismailis in this country are often not well placed to reach the peak of the community hierarchy in East Africa.

In detail, some of the calculations might be as follows. For Sadru A the market for his qualification in architecture in East Africa is improved by no Ismaili practitioners in the field; much of the lucrative work goes to expatriate firms. The place of his family's capital in East Africa is bleak. It consists largely in land, in the form of a coconut plantation, and processing machinery, workers' accommodation, offices, etc. With the threat of expropriation at hand there is little market value in it. As we have seen, his father, who is nevertheless wealthy, is not investing in further plant, but exporting what capital he can, to be handled in London formerly by Shiraz and now by Sadru, and is also giving ostentatiously and generously to communal causes. (Through price adjustment, Sadru A's father's position as an exporter of produce is an advantageous one from the point of view of exchange control.) As a unit, the A family is thus operating in a co-ordinated fashion. Sadru A's chances in the community prestige quest are not much harmed by his presence in Britain, for as we saw, his family as parvenus are outside the charmed circle. Sadru A's notability in London is greater than could be obtained for the expenditure of the same resources in East Africa.

Though his accountancy articles are not yet over, Amir B has no intention of returning to East Africa when they are. The communal disengagement of his father, his presence in London and 'non grata' status combine to indicate a weakened influence in East Africa. As a chartered accountant, with a degree in economics to boot, he might nevertheless be assured of a good job in private industry or in IPS. But his thorough anglicisation, through school and beyond, and his position which produces friends and affinal kin outside the community have combined to reduce his will to succeed in the community hierarchy; in many ways he is profoundly suspicious of it, and regards the London council with not a little hauteur. Again his family capital is tied up with property, real estate in East Africa, where it is somewhat vulnerable (especially in the absence of his father), and now also in property in Britain. It is not commercial capital, and hence not immediately in line to benefit from the financial institutions. In short, neither in East Africa nor in London is the community able to offer Amir B a better market for any of his resources; in return, he himself has moved into a market for prestige beyond the community monopoly.

The Cs, CRs and Ds have no powerful senior kin in East Africa able to offset the insecurity which their economic activities would inevitably have there. Nizar D's profession fits him logically either for a job in government or with a large contractor; and like Sadru A his communal affiliation offers him no special priority in the field. In consequence he is inactive in the community in Britain, although attending the Chatham jamatkhana. The CRs came to Brtain largely to escape the possibility that they would be driven from the employment market altogether. Once here they sought to cash their resources in the modest form of a house, and did not strive, even at their economic level, within the community, from which they are withdrawn. By contrast, Aziz C does aspire to position within the community. In East Africa he would not be well placed to achieve this, his command of capital being relatively slight, and his skill not one which would recommend him automatically for a high position in the community

institutions or the enterprises they foster; while his father, though much respected for his knowledge of religion, is of insufficient stature in the economic life of the community to improve his prospects. In London, however, the absence of an established aristocracy appears to leave room for him to better his standing in a way which would have no meaning for Amir B. In short, the game is played with smaller prizes for lower stakes, a situation which means that he can afford to carry on playing, but also that he wishes to do so, because even the rewards of a community office in London would represent a great gain for him.

It has recently been pointed out that one of the benefits of immigration to the host society is that it brings people into the labour market free of the cost of bringing them up and educating them, and calculations have shown the average savings involved. The metropolitan gain is the hinterland's loss; in the Ismaili case the cost is compounded by the high degree to which many of the settlers in Britain have been educated, either financed by the community, or by their kin. Whether private or public, the export of highly educated personnel represents a double loss, namely the lost investment and the lost longterm returns on it. Put another way, it amounts to a form of capital export, though one which is unequivocally determined by individual considerations. We have already seen how this goes alongside other forms of capital export, evidenced by the acquisition of houses in London by East African residents, even where nominal ownership as in the case of the house the As live in, is vested in residents of this country. What the total value of property, equity, unit trusts, bank deposits and insurance policies held by Ismailis resident in East Africa amounts to in Britain is impossible to say, but very few with any surplus to spare have neglected to hedge their bets on East African stability. (Holdings have not remained static since the introduction of exchange control in the 1960s; a variety of devices, large and small, are available for the determined. It is sometimes said that the obstacles are inversely related to the amount involved, and there may be much in this. There are those whose profession it is to 'arrange' these things for a commission.)

These decisions taken by individuals run counter to the policies of the imamate, which has been concerned with assembling resources in East Africa for industrial development. This means that capital and manpower, especially professional manpower, have to be retained in East Africa. In Frischauer's recent, semi-official study[1] the high priority accorded the impliedly revolutionary IPS project is amply attested. There the starting point of the operation is located in a view expressed by the Ags Khan's (German) economic adviser -

> the community seemed industrially in the same position as the Germans in 1945 - at zero (p. 246).

Thus Kienbaum Unternehmensberatung were commissioned to survey the place of the Ismailis in the East African economies.

> "The Aga Khan foresaw considerable changes," Dr. Hengel' (the said adviser) 'recalled. "The end of colonial rule was in sight and he wanted to have a blueprint ready to integrate his plans into the future ecohomic and political pattern" (p.245)
>
> How to introduce diversification and finance...were the two principal problems (p. 246)
>
> The study looked into consumer industries capable of replacing imports and into local products suitable for exports. It suggested the size of individual enterprises to give them the best chance of success and how Ismaili firms could avoid competing against each other or duplicating effort (emphasis added) (p.247)

As matters progressed -

> The leisurely community so deeply rooted in the past was transformed into a beehive of activity (p. 248)

(a remark which expresses the excessive emphasis in Frischauer on the leadership of the imamate against the 'primitive' (p. 67) atavism of Ismailis, not to mention their 'tribal customs' (p.66)). Thus -

> The amount needed to launch three East African IPS companies...was £1m., but when, even at this late stage, doubts were raised, the Aga Khan simply said: "I will finance it!" and - proof of his confidence in its ultimate success - put up nearly the whole amount. (p.253)
>
> The Aga Khan's associates are bubbling over with enthusiastic accounts of how it (IPS) works (p.254)
>
> This novel kind of organisation, privately run with government participation, appealed to foreign investors (loc. cit).

From this it can be seen how deeply committed to the IPS project the

1. Frischauer, 1970.

imamate had become. But it was not only a financial investment; it was also a political investment, designed to 'make an impact in the political or sociological field' (p. 255). In other words, the imamate differed profoundly from those of its adherents who took the view that there was no future for them in the East African labour or capital markets. By associating IPS with both the governments and foreign investment the Aga Khan proclaimed his faith. East Africa was safe for industrial development on a large scale.

And so it may be; that is not our concern. What is of importance is the evident fact that many Ismailis do not feel that they share in that safety. In this, in their opposition to communal irredentism, they are answering to a view of their interests which dichotomises clearly between the future of industrial capital in East Africa and their own future based on individual positions in the labour market and on the safety of petty capital.[1] In some ways community education policy may be seen as an attempt to tailor a labour force, equipped with managerial and technical skills, to the requirements of IPS and its offshoots. But the skills are individualised, and may be deployed in other markets, while their bearers are free to develop their own strategies in answer to private demands rather than those of the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

The subordination of the East African community to the goal of industrialisation implies a shift in the basis of leadership in the community in East Africa, for the hegemony of the independent, self-acting businessmen can no longer be guaranteed. 'A younger generation (is)

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1. Meister gets close to the point: 'Les membres de la communauté ismaélienne constituent toutefois une exception: obéissant aux injonctions de l'Aga Kahn (sic), ils ont souvent pris une des nationalités est-africaines. De même, c'est à partir d'eux que s'est constituée en avril 1963 l'East African Industrial Promotion Services, société au capital de 1.2 million de livres pour le développement industriel. Malgré cette initiative, les commerçants asiatiques comme les commerçants européens travaillent avec le minimum de liquidités et sur comptes courants débiteurs, réalisent ou hypothèquent leur investissements et transfèrent leurs disponibilités à l'étranger' (Meister (1966), pp. 121-22). But not all Ismailis see their fortunes as linked to the future of IPS.

standing in the wings to take over before long, mostly products of the old Aga Khan's educational programme'.[1] For in the IPS project Ismaili capital is to be diluted by foreign investment. The specifically Ismaili role is intended to lie in the field of technical expertise, both in finance and in manufacturing itself. Will not the managers tend to supersede the old elite whose motivating prestige arose partly from their ability to regulate the economic chances of other Ismailis? Capital generated within the community will increasingly go into industrial projects, channelled thence by Diamond Investment Trust, rather than come back to it as small loans to finance smallscale enterprise. Commanding the investment of communal capital in industry the new technocrats will wield power over the creation of occupational opportunities, where once the elite allocated resources to individuals to set up their own concerns. In an extreme situation Ismaili capital might become thoroughly dissolved in or mingled with big capital from expatriate sources. The shareholders in such enterprises would lose their grip on day-to-day decisions, for example, personnel policy. Ismailis employed as managers would then enjoy influence with their fellows since they would hire and fire and be responsible for raw material procurement and credit buying. In this they would tap the same sources which give the present business elite much of its private power.

For one reason and another, none of the Ismailis whose situations in Britain have been described in detail has any major claim to a position in the new order, or at least to a position which would redound to the prestige of themselves and their families. If Amir B and Sadru and Farida A could find employment fairly easily in these concerns (and only the first has a qualification with an immediately obvious relevance), they would nevertheless not easily acquire prominence from them. Aziz C and the CRs lack the essential qualifications for bureaucratic advancement - it would enhance their prestige. Nizar D, though employable by virtue of

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1. Frischauer, p. 248.

his knowledge, lacks any influence in East Africa, lineal or affinal. On the other hand, an example of those who might expect to profit by the new institutions would be Amin L. Like Amir B he took a degree in economics in England and then qualified in accountancy in 1965. His paternal uncle, once managing director of Jubilee Insurance, was then manager of an IPS enterprise. Amin L became an executive in the IPS parent organisation. Last year he married Farida A's niece, Zubeda, who had qualified as a chartered secretary in England. This girl, whose mother (Farida A's much elder sister) and father had always been financially unstable, greatly delighted her family by immediately securing a good job in an expatriate firm (with offices in the huge IPS building in Nairobi). Amin L seemed very well placed in the community, and it was not long before Zubeda was herself appointed to the local education committee (where she lobbied for a bursary for her cousin). But now even the Ls are actively considering emigration to Canada, fearing in the longrun for their jobs, their potential children's education and for whatever they might accummulate and have to leave behind should the need arise.

In brief, it appears that for those for whom a job in community-sponsored enterprise is not itself a kind of social advancement, or those who cannot command a high position in these organisations, that is to say, for Ismailis who have failed to take advantage of community education facilities to the full, or whose family status depended on private, relatively petty capital, East Africa can appeal little.

In London, and without any commitment to return to East Africa, we have seen that the basic alternative courses vis-à-vis the community are withdrawal (the Bs, CRs and Ds) or, where there are effective senior kin in East Africa to whose prestige their British-settled scions are linked, status-striving after the pattern described in part I (though, as I have noted, for lesser prizes with smaller stakes) (the As and Cs). Of the former it is the Bs and Ds who aremost closely assimilated into their British social class, notably through intermarriage in the case of the Bs,

and in both families through a multiplicity of contacts with non-Ismailis. By contrast the CRs are relatively isolated, though they have only recently moved into an area where they are likely to come into informal contact with non-Ismaili neighbours. In any case they were the least anglicised of Ismailis: in language Mr. CR's English remains weak, his wife's negligible; in housing in that even their new house is crowded; Mrs. CR retains her sari, and seems to confine her extra-domestic contacts to her daughter, Nurbanu C. Against this, and in their different ways, the As and Cs still see that the community has a role to play for them. Perhaps in the case of Aziz C this is something of a reflex reaction to his role as an Ismaili businessman, irrespective of its aptness to the British situation; though it is also possible that the presence of his parents in East Africa, where his father has only recently become his own master in a small business, spurs him on. But as we have seen (p.110) Aziz is conscious that little is done for him, at any rate by comparison with East Africa, and his enthusiasm may fall casualty to this view in the course of time. Nonetheless, he is eager to fulfil his kinship obligations, going so far as actually to court them. He has worked hard to bring comfort and grace into his various homes, not for his own eyes alone. His reward comes partly in the good reports of him that he hopes reach East Africa (they do; he is at least a 'good son').

The As, to adopt the terminology of Goldthorpe and Lockwood (1963), though 'economically' and 'normatively' firmly implanted in a middle-class professional stratum of British society, nonetheless retain 'relational' contacts with other Ismailis and with the community. Unlike Aziz C, however, the As do not put all the emphasis of their social effort on rising within the community hierarchy, or becoming influential in it. Some of their closest contacts are irrelevant in this respect, as we have seen, and some of their effort bypasses the London community, where it does not show, so that they are also directly involved as <u>agents</u> for Ismailis, their kin, still in East Africa, much of whose business they

handle. Farida A, who has a power of attorney from her brother Shamshu, keeps a set of files for various people in East Africa - her father, two brothers, her father-in-law and other affines, and for the husband of one of her sisters. It will be recalled that their estate agent helped Shamshu find a house in which to invest during the course of his visit in 1970; this house was then conveyed on the power of attorney, and finally Sadru A collaborated with his estate agent on planning its conversion to flats. They will supervise the necessary decoration and furnishing, though the routine work of letting and rent collection will be left to the estate agent, as it is with Sadru's father's other houses in London. Sadru A keeps jointly with his uncle Shiraz a close eye on the market for produce from the plantation. When Farida's brother-in-law came to London he gave her some authority over his assets, which then made for trouble when there was a dispute with an insurance company. All this the As accomplish uncomplainingly; it is only at the height of the tourist season that their obligations seem to threaten to oppress them. That they have succeeded in administering Shamshu's interest in Britain is partitularly satisfactory to them since he was a prime opponent of their marriage (p.113), while his high standing in East Africa improves the AS' credentials and those of Sadru A's parents. (When Shamshu included his niece in his party in 1970, it soon became clear that there was a hope that she and Sadru's younger brother, a medical student, would find each other congenial; alas, Sadru's brother was spending the summer on a course in Finland).

All this must be set against the strategies of those who do not settle in Britain, primarily, it has been suggested, because they can achieve a position in East African organisations based on big, and therefore relatively safe capital which is either commensurate with the status of their families or else likely to advance it. (In this one should perhaps not restrict the question to IPS enterprises; Mohamed K's hoped-for research post in the Swedish government-financed, low-temperature physics laboratory, for example, though it would not give him direct power would

nevertheless fit into the category.) Through the Aga Khan's overriding authority in London the community has developed so as not to favour settlement, nor much to cater to the interests of the settlers; though we saw that there were indications that this policy might be modified (see p. 168 (n.)). Thus it may be said that inducements formulated in terms of the community prestige hierarchy fail to secure the return of the whole of the skilled labour force for the development of the modern industrial sector in East Africa. Heavy investment there is unable to subsume in its interest those of all Ismailis. The remainder have then to reckon on their skills or the relatively petty capital of their families, and their calculations have brought many of them permanently to England. If they do not conflict, the interests of largescale investment and those of small business capital at least diverge, and this divergence is reflected in the structure of the community in Britain.

In London we have described a weak, 'low-profile' council at the centre of a comparatively weakly integrated jamat. But its failure to establish institutions comparable in scale and scope with those in East Africa cannot be written down merely as the result of a unilateral decision of the imamate. As was pointed out, most of the welfare functions of an East African provincial council are superseded by the state, which thus destroys much of the rationale of the East African system. As for capital accumulation within the community, which played so crucial a role in East Africa, this too has not reappeared. In the sphere of social capital the intervention of the state is sufficient reason. In that of commercial capital the small numbers involved might themselves undermine any such project; moreover, and perhaps more important, alternative economic strategies are available in that many of the most able Ismailis have been trained for lucrative jobs in large organisations, or in professions in which their knowledge is the dominant element in their capitalisation. In any case, it was argued in part I that it was specifically the willing catalysis provided by the imamate which made the balance between social and private capital formation

manipulable at the level of the community as a whole, through the substitution of an immediate value expressed in terms of the approval of the imamate and yielding returns in the future (via memani, mandli, dassondh, etc.) for the immediate returns derived from private investment. Without such an intervention by the imamate, and able to secure employment in white-collar occupations, the better educated strata of the settled British community are thus effectively without great incentive to risk their capital other than in the private matter of buying real estate; and if they did they could never hope to achieve the impression made in East Africa up to independence in a country so highly developed as modern Britian. No great pressure for finance corporations or insurance companies is therefore to be expected. Taxed to a sufficient degree by the state, and freed of the requirement to seek prestige in the community, they can shift the emphasis of their budgeting from investment to consumption, in line with the expectations that fall upon them as members of a class in British society. They need not fill their houses to capacity, they can exchange their cars every two years, spend spare time in their gardens, buy their furnishings at Heals and Habitat, holiday in Greece, go into semi-retirement in local authorities, and teach their children expensive lessons about the dangers of the export trade. Given such a pattern for the affluent, a class role is also indicated for the less affluent, skilled or educated, for they depended on their association with a particular section of the owners of commercial capital for their emancipation.[1] In England, where Aziz and Gulamhusein C must shift for themselves so far as resources are concerned, there is little hope for Akbar CR.

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1. One Ismaili employed in the personnel department of a large retail organisation found herself beset with applicants of her own community expecting her to show favour; her reaction was first embarrassment and then anger, which latter they reciprocated having expected that she would help them, that she ought to.

If we want an image which will express the distinction between the concept of community active with the Ismailis, and that which by implication underlies some other migrant groups, we can find it in Durkheim's organic as opposed to mechanical solidarity.[1] In East Africa the theme of interdependent heterogeneity was to the fore, so that the community itself might be said to have had a kind of organic solidarity. The economic division of labour on which this social unity-in-diversity was founded was nonetheless not one whose relevance was confined to East Africa; once there were Ismailis in Britain the division of labour reappeared, and with it the social distinctions.[2] What did not survive the journey was the encapsulation of the solidarity within the community. In England Ismailis were unable to set in motion the institutions through which their individual economic lives mutually influenced each other. Instead they found themselves substituting PAYE for dassondh at Chandrat, and investing their surplus resources in private houses on the one hand and in concerns in which the community as such could never conceivably play a dominant role on the other. In a metaphor, the bus in which they had travelled together vanished, replaced by a series of private cars and bicycles; each one's progress was then his own affair, though there were signs that the motorists were beginning to think of their interests as linked with those of non-Ismaili motorists, and likewise the cyclists of theirs as tied to those of cyclists in general.

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1. Durkheim, 1964, Book One.

2. In this degree of social differentiation the Ismaili migration is perhaps surpassed only by the Jewish, where an old and prosperous settlement was overwhelmed between 1870 and the first World War by largescale flight from poverty and political terror in Eastern Europe. Gartner's fascinating account of this migration suggests that much might be achieved by detailed comparison of these two movements, though in scale, duration and period they are very different. In the opposition of Anglo-Jewry, expressed through the United Synagogue and the Jewish Chronicle, for the hebrot, hadurim and socialism of the East End, and perhaps even in the conflict of dietary orthodoxies, we may see an exaggerated form of the communal dissolution of Ismailism.
Gartner, 1960, especially chapter VII.

'Vanished' is too strong a word. Immobilised, deprived of fuel, the shell in which common association takes place remains, in the form of the jamatkhana and its ritual. Ismailism, indeed, has not been immune from the influences which have affected the indigenous churches in Brtain, which Wilson[1] associates with the secular institutionalisation of many of the tasks once forming part of the churches' repertoire of roles, as well as with ideological matters. Perhaps metaphysically it is said that there has been a loss of religious community as the repository of the social self, and it may be thought that the Ismailis are experiencing this in a peculiarly sharp and rapid fashion. It would, however, be far too soon to lament the passing of Ismailism in England. We have seen how at the present time the jamatkhana retains some hold over those still with aspirations, as an arena in which they can test their strength against other contenders for prestige. We have also noticed that it goes beyond this, however. By attending it one can not only ensure that good reports of one's conduct are received in East Africa,[2] but one can also feel relieved of a sense of displacement which afflicts even the most anglicised of Ismailis from time to time. In this sense, the timeless, placeless ritual acts gain by the very alienness of the world they succeed for a moment in conjuring away. Perhaps it is in this context that we should interpret the behaviour of the Ds who, it will be remembered, reduced the Chatham jamat to a community-in-ritual, effectively torpedoing the commensality which might have made it more. In effect they sought out the ritual while rejecting the 'extraneous' associations which would normally surround it. Much the same attitude could be abstracted out of Rehmet B's unobtrustive but relatively frequent

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1. Wilson, (1966), especially chapter II.

2. One Ismaili, having attended Palace Gate for the third time in two years, was surprised to receive a letter from her mother expressing pleasure that she was going to the jamatkhana, the matter having been somewhat exaggerated by a kindly lady on holiday in London.

presence at Palace Gate. In this connection it is worth noting that there are those who occasionally go to the mosque, 'but not inside', not because it is crowded but because for them the purpose of the visit is fulfilled by the presence of their fellow Ismailis, perhaps by the familiar spectacle of assembly itself, and also by the chance of home news or an unexpected visitor.

Wilson argues that it is reaction on the part of the clergy to the churches' loss of functions that they emphasise the pomp and circumstance of ritual expression, maximising the inalienable kernel of their role; while their loss of prestige inclines them to seek through scholarship for a kind of intellectual charisma. With Ismailism, where there is no professional clerisy, neither trend is to be discerned at this level (though the imam has tried to stiffen the conviction of his followers by emphasising the need for the study of the texts of Ismaili history). Though there have been changes in the wording of the du'a, and even in the language in which it is said (formerly Gujarati, now Arabic), these are not related to the British situation, and have not resulted in increasing emphasis on the ritual as spectacle or drama. If the ritual has become in any sense more central to the life of the community, it is only by the default of the other strands of interaction which in East Africa were interwoven with it. Here, as in everything else above, much remains to be seen.

APPENDIX

The preamble to the constitution of the East African community:

BISMILLA-HIR RAHMA-NIR RAHIM

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-AR RASUL-ULLAH

WHEREAS the Holy Prophet Mohammed (May Peace be upon Him) is the last Prophet of Allah.

AND WHEREAS Hazrat Mowlana Ali (May Peace be upon Him) is the first Imam of the Shia Imami Ismailis.

AND WHEREAS Hazrat Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Huseini Hazar Imam is the forty-ninth Imam in whom is vested absolute and unfettered Power and Authority over and in respect of all religious and social matters of the Shia Imami Ismailis.

AND WHEREAS it is the Desire and Hidayat of Mowlana Hazar Imam that Rules of Conduct be given to the Shia Imami Ismailis in Africa:

a) for their religious and social welfare;

b) for the achievement of uniformity in the observance of religious rites, customs and conventions observed and practised by them;

c) for the several matters relating to their personal law;

d) for the constitution of proper organisations for the achievement of the foregoing aims and for the regulation of their internal religious and social affairs;

e) for the management and administration of such organisations.

AND WHEREAS it is the Gracious Wish and Hidayat of Mowlana Hazar Imam that the said Rules of Conduct shall be in accordance with the Spirit of Islam.

NOW THEREFORE HIS HIGHNESS HAZRAT MOWLANA SHAH KARIM AL-HUSEINI AGA KHAN by virtue and in exercise of the Powers and Authority in this behalf vested in Him as Hazar Imam is graciously pleased to ORDAIN AND IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED as follows:

THAT THE SHIA IMAMI ISMAILIS IN AFRICA SHALL IN ALL MATTERS AND THINGS PROVIDED FOR IN THE CONSTITUTION BE BOUND BY AND GOVERNED IN

ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS THEREOF

ORDAINED UNDER THE SEAL OF HIS HIGHNESS MOWLANA SHAH KARIM AL-HUSEINI AGA KHAN AT PARIS, THIS TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF JUNE ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SIXTY TWO

AGA KHAN

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